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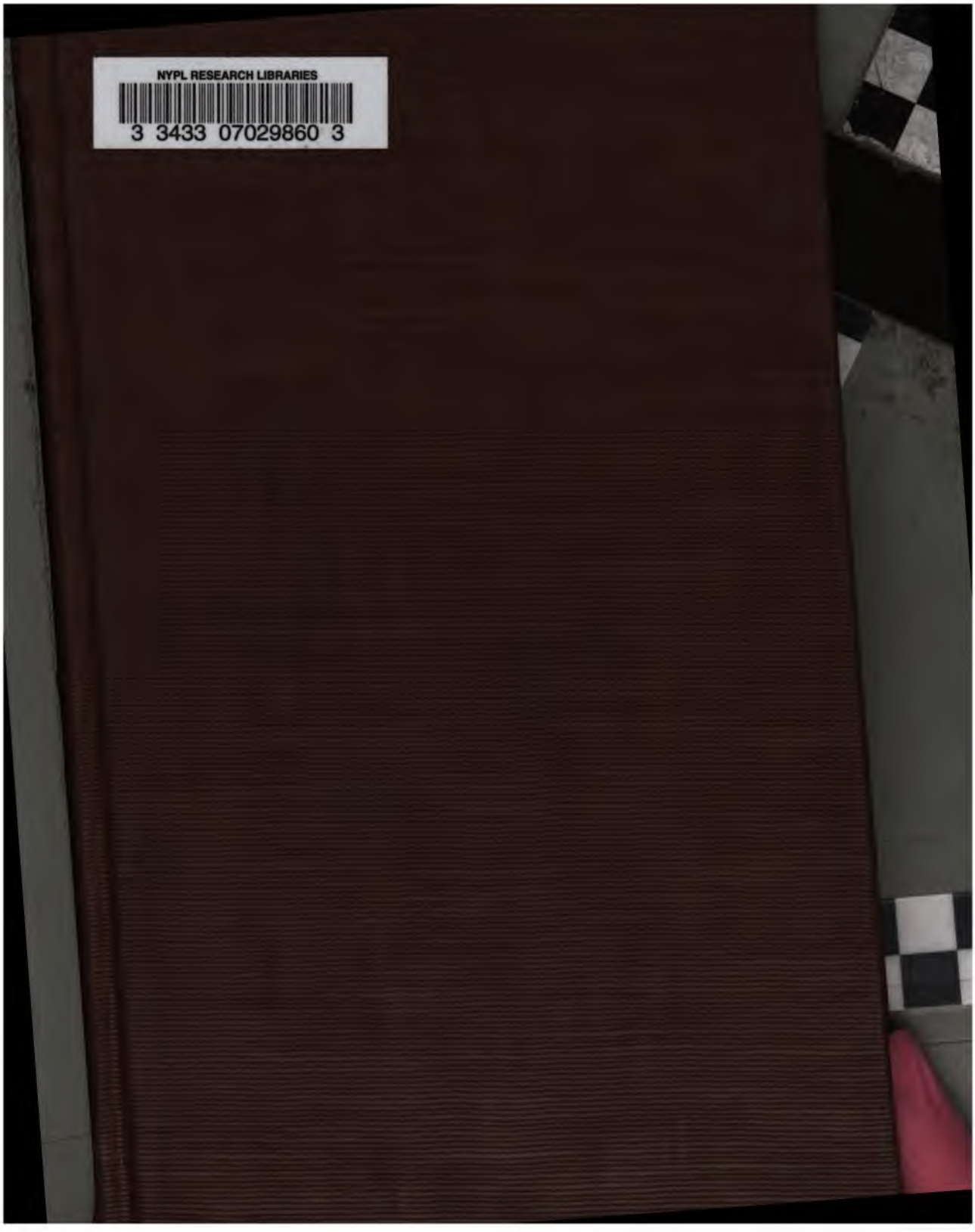
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THE

CHURCHMAN ARMED

AGAINST THE

ERRORS OF THE TIME.

BY " THE SOCIETY FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF TRACTS IN DEFENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND, AS BY LAW ESTABLISHED."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

CHURCHMAN ARMED

AGAINST

THE ERRORS OF THE TIME.

PART V.

TOLERATION.

NO subject has of late so much agitated the public mind as Toleration; and, since the voice of reason can seldom be heard in the midst of agitation, it is not strange that clamor has so much prevailed. Instead of being cautiously discussed, as one of the most important and difficult points in legislation, it has been the watchword of a party, a bait for popularity. Hence, by the magic of a name, professions have been applauded as generous and disinterested, which would once have been disclaimed by all sects alike, as the effect of apathy, or irreligion; while the opposing class of virtues, stigmatized by odious names, have been dismissed as ancient absurdities. For

liberality and moderation are such seductive sounds, that few have the coolness to inquire whether they may not be pushed beyond their bounds, nor are aware that liberality may become prodigal, and moderation indifference. But the peculiar complexion of the times has carried matters to still greater extremes. Whoever would now be regarded as liberal, must actually encourage principles which he believes to be false, and practices which he dreads as injurious. Hence a deference to the experience and wisdom of our ancestors is a barbarous superstition: to support a primitive and national church, gothic bigotry; but to educate our children in the truths we revere ourselves, has roused to active opposition, deists, dissenters, socinians, quakers, and *hoc genus omne.* Christians must therefore be recalled to a more sober contemplation of things. They must learn not to seek the praise of men by a disparagement of their zeal towards God. Enchanted by a meretricious liberality, they have hitherto treated truth and error alike, or rather, the latter has experienced a kind of affectionate pity, while the former has been received with cold acknowledgements, little better than a repulse. Yet, however we may pity the person, no countenance should ever be shewn to error: for what each individual deems to be error, that ought he to suppress: it is his duty, considered as a member of religious, or civil society. On the contrary, what he deems truth, it

is equally his duty to support. For genuine charity seeks the real welfare, not the present ease of mankind; and, with such charity, Christian Toleration necessarily coincides, which it well may do, since Toleration signifies, or at least used to signify, patiently bearing with something wrong. Therefore, whatever a state promises to tolerate, that at the same time it avows to be against her laws, yet, abstaining from the punishment thereof, for certain causes assigned or not. With respect to religious errors, the cause is, man's inability to punish them justly. But what the state deems to be truth, and therefore productive of happiness to its subjects, she is bound for, therefore invested with power, to support and encourage. By such means at least are the ruling powers warranted to curb opinions adverse to their own. To care for none of these things, and treat all religious sects alike, is an heathenish indifference, a policy arising from a total disregard of all religion, or a latent desire of promoting some particular sect, rather than from enlightened views, and a just estimate of human nature. For every experienced politician must acknowledge how advantageous it would be that an whole kingdom should, as much as possible, be of one mind, and the great danger of contests when the opposing parties are of equal number and strength. The difficulty of adjusting measures so as to inflame none, the different ideas each are apt to form of

politics, the extreme jealousy observed towards government by those whose opinions it does not profess, are all so many sources of embarrassment, which must frequently paralyze or prevent extended plans. And such a government would necessarily fall in any serious internal convulsion. Parties so equally balanced as to admit no superior, or by a temporary union of discordant parts, enabled to match the otherwise predominant division, are ready on all occasions to wrestle for the rod of power. Should it fall a prize to the associates, they again would contend for its possession, and the land sink under anarchy and misrule. This is no visionary theory, but the history of our own great rebellion. Therefore to inform the public mind on this subject, and guard against the fatal consequences of the present immoderate moderation, the following tracts are republished, in which the subject is considered on different grounds.

In Brett's sermon on Moderation, which stands the first of this division, our subject is treated in a religious light, and the reader will thence learn what kind of toleration Scripture directs individuals to shew each other. He will likewise find clearly pointed out to him, the great difference between opinions and persons, that while no violence should be offered to the latter, no indulgence is due to the former, when they subvert the vital principles of christianity. Such conduct

is required of a sincere Churchman wherever living, for by such only can he separate himself from the error and the punishment of the Laodiceans. The other treatise professedly discusses the duty of that ruling power whose subjects are divided in their religious opinions. The writer begins by shewing that it is in the power of the magistrate to encourage true religion by the means of motives, which, while they control the outward behaviour, insensibly influence the disposition, and affect the mind. That Providence itself uses external motives for internal purposes. The arguments of Locke and Bale are considered and answered, and he proves his reasoning by the test of historical facts. In the second chapter he shews that the magistrate possesses this right by the law of nature. Because the magistrate, as guardian of the public civil good, is of course concerned with the outward behaviour of his subjects. He cannot therefore be indifferent to their principles, these being the source of action, which, by consequence, extends his superintendence to religious opinions, as more particularly forming those very principles. But the same conclusion may be more immediately drawn from considering why society was instituted; for the support of religion is one of its chief and most important ends. Having thus laid his foundation in natural religion, he in the next chapter shews its agreement with revealed, and proves from

Scripture, the duty of a magistrate to encourage truth and piety.

The fourth chapter meets the grand objection, that, according to this system, it may become the duty of a magistrate to support falsehoods, or erroneous forms of truth, he being liable to error. But to the first case it is answered, that all legislators have found religion to be a necessary ingredient in political society. Therefore the supporting a bad one, is better than supporting none. And of course as to the second erroneous forms of true religion will be better than a complete system of falsehood. If again it is urged, that the magistrate may encourage true religion improperly; the possibility must be granted, but we cannot regard an argument so illogical as one drawn from the abuse against the use. Our author considers, in his last chapter, the different modes by which the magistrate may exercise this authority, and thence shews the practicability of the theory without doing violence to conscience, or exercising such influence on the mind, as would be painful to the feelings of any sincere person.

To the thinking part of the community, these arguments, it is presumed, may prove an antidote against those wild notions which at present so generally prevail. They are indeed the production of that revolutionary furor which deranged the moral world, no less in degree, and more irre-

trievably in effect, than the political. From ancient lore, the practice of antiquity, the events of six thousand years, men have rashly flown to try experiments on nations and religions, as they would on chemical combinations. Others, although aware of the folly, have promoted the confusion, expecting to guide the storm, and rise preeminent over its ruins. For such a supposition can alone account for the encouragement which the worst form of christianity has lately met with, or for the coldness so long shewn to the best.

And we may fairly regard that to be the best, which no one considers inferior to any sect but his own.

TRUE MODERATION:

A SERMON ON PHIL. IV. 5.

BY THOMAS BRETT, LL D.

RECTOR OF BETTESHANGER IN KENT.

Let your Moderation be known unto all Men.—
Phil. iv. 5.

MODERATION being a virtue which has of late years been wonderfully cried up, and continually in the mouths of some, who glory in nothing so much as the name of *moderate men*, and who are continually pressing this portion of Scripture upon all zealous members of the Established Church, as if our zeal for our most excellent religion was not to be reconciled with this precept of St. Paul, I think it very requisite that we should consider what is the true, natural, genuine meaning of these words, and the duty required by the Apostle in this text. In order to which I shall shew

First, What Moderation is, in what sense it is a virtue, and in what it is not so. And

Secondly, How it is to be made known.

I. First, Then we may observe that *moderation* is a word not to be found in our English Bibles, except in this one place, where some will have it, that it is not well rendered, as not answering the true sense of the original. But I design not to find fault with the translation, or to quarrel with the word, which I think a very good one, if it be rightly understood. And I am persuaded the best way to understand it may be, to consider how our translators have rendered the original word here used in other parts of the New Testament. Acts xxiv. 4. we find it translated *clemency*; 2 Cor. x. 1. *gentleness*, and 1 Tim. iii. 3. *patience*. And in the Old Testament, Psal. lxxxvi. 5. where the same word is used in the Greek, we find it rendered a *readiness to forgive*. The Latin translations, as the Vulgar Latin, Arias Montanus, Beza and Tremelius, rendered it by such words as signify *lenity* or *mildness*, *equity*, *modesty* or *humility*. And I take it that our word *moderation*, as it signifies a virtue, and as it is to be understood in this place, comprehends all these. So that to say, "Let your moderation be known unto all men," is the same as to say, behave yourselves towards all persons, that whosoever you have to deal with may find you to be kind, gentle, patient, ready to forgive, mild, equal, modest and humble. But certainly there is nothing in the whole Scripture that can give a colour to that construction, which those, who pride themselves in the name of *mo-*

derate men, put upon this excellent precept: who make the moderation here recommended by St. Paul to consist in having a moderate opinion for all religions, and to believe it an indifferent thing, whether a man goes to this church, or to that meeting-house. To think episcopacy and an episcopal clergy a good political institution for some times and some countries, and what may be borne and complied with as long as it cannot be remedied, but that no man has any obligation in point of conscience to submit to this ecclesiastical government; but that, if he dislikes it, he may occasionally or altogether separate from it, and chuse what pastor he pleases for himself; and he that blames him for so doing, is a man, they say, that wants moderation, and has no regard to this precept of the Apostle. In short, the *moderation* so much cried up at this time, consists in believing all religions called Protestant to be agreeable to the institution of Christ, though they neither administer his word or sacraments according as he has appointed, nor believe those articles of faith which he has taught in the Gospel. If we will be moderate according to the moderation in fashion, we must not condemn those who deny our Saviour's divinity, as the Socinians; those who refuse baptism to infants, and deny the soul to live when separated from the body, as the Anabaptists; nor those who reject both the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and renounce the

Lord that bought us, and redeemed us with his blood, believing in no other Christ but an imaginary one within themselves, as the Quakers; nor must we call these persons heretics: neither may we censure those other dissenters who renounce episcopal government, and contemn the orders and service of our church, setting up for themselves teachers according to their own fancies, and separating themselves from our communion, as the Presbyterians and Independants; nor may we call these schismatics. If we will be the fashionable *moderate men*, we must believe all these are in the right way to Heaven, at least we must not tell them that they go wrong. No, if we do, we are high-flown, and want moderation. But I must take the liberty to say, that such a moderation as this is so far from being a virtue, that it is a shameful vice, and therefore cannot be the thing which the Apostle recommends in the text. For neither Christ, nor any of his Apostles have any where taught us to be indifferent or lukewarm in matters of religion, but the quite contrary: we must be zealous and earnest, both to preserve the faith and the unity of the church; and that not only at some certain times, and on certain occasions, but at all times, and on all occasions, for so this very Apostle St. Paul, who recommends moderation to us in the text, has elsewhere taught us: "It is good," says he, "to be zealously af-
"fected always in a good thing, and not only

"when I am present with you."* If therefore faith and the unity of the church are good things, here is a plain recommendation of a constant and perpetual zeal for them. But we have not only such a general exhortation to zeal for religion and religious matters, but we are particularly and expressly commanded to be zealous for these two things.

1. First, The holy Scripture enjoins us to be earnest for the preservation of the true faith. Even St. Paul himself presses this upon us in this very Epistle, where he recommends moderation, commanding us to "Stand fast in one spirit, with "one mind, striving together for the faith of the "Gospel."† The *moderation* therefore, which he afterwards exhorts us to, must not be construed to interfere with this precept. For then we must make him to contradict himself in the same place, and writing to the same persons. Again, this same Apostle calls the *holding faith*, that is, the adhering stedfastly to that and a good conscience, the warring a good warfare.‡ I am sure this is not consistent with yielding up our faith to every one that shall oppose it, and permitting all persons to believe as they please, without daring to shew their errors, and letting them know the dangerous consequences of them. How can we "fight the good fight of faith, and pro-

* Gal. iv. 18. † Phil. i. 27. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 18, 19.

" fess a good profession before many witnesses,"* as we are exhorted to do, unless we publicly declare it in opposition to all heresies whatsoever? Can that man comfortably say at his last hour, " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my " course, I have kept the faith,"† who has never concerned himself for the preservation of the faith; who has always thought himself at liberty to believe as he listed, and that all others might do the same? Did St. Paul do thus? Was he of this opinion? If so, how came he to undertake so many dangerous journies to so many parts of the world, and to suffer so much in all places where he came? But all this he did to propagate the true faith; and that, to be sure, because he certainly knew that it was no indifferent matter what faith any man professed. Well, but St. Paul did this to propagate the Christian faith in general; but this is not the case now: all Protestants profess the faith which St. Paul taught, and therefore what need is there now for this kind of zeal? But did St. Paul teach that Christ was no more than a mere man? No, he expressly taught the contrary, when he tells us, that he " is over all God " blessed for ever."‡ Yet this is a doctrine now taught and maintained by some that call themselves Protestants; but certainly we may oppose it, and I am sure I will do it upon all occasions.

* 1 Tim. vi. 12. † 2 Tim. iv. 7. ‡ Rom. ix 5.

Did St. Paul teach that the soul cannot live separate from the body, and that it sleeps with it in the same grave till the resurrection? If so, how came he to have a "desire to depart, and to be "with Christ?"* How could he think that far better than to live here? Is there such a thing as better or worse in a state of insensibility? Or could he hope for any enjoyment of Christ in such a state as made him incapable of enjoying any thing? And yet this sleep of the soul is asserted and defended by a whole party of Protestants. Again, did St. Paul teach that there is no outward Christ, and that baptism and the Lord's Supper are beggarly elements? How came he then in all places to preach that Christ which was crucified at Jerusalem,† and never so much as to mention a Christ within, that ever I could find in his writings? Why did he baptize whole households,‡ and give admirable precepts concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper?§ And yet we have an innocent party, as they are called, that teach what is very contrary to St. Paul in these matters. And shall we not offer to say that these are false and scandalous doctrines, that they strike at the foundation of Christianity, that they are heretical and pernicious, and consequently caution our flocks that they be not seduced by such deceiving wolves, whatsoever sheep's clothing they

* Phil. i. 23. † 1 Cor. i. 23. ‡ Ibid. i. 16. § Ibid. xi. 20, &c.

appear in? When Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, he is a more dangerous enemy than when he appears barefaced; for when he is so disguised, he would deceive, if it was possible, even the very elect. And therefore no good man need be afraid to oppose such notorious errors, which are so contrary to the faith, lest he should be thought to want moderation or charity. For these virtues are not to be extended to errors and heresies, but to men, and we must oppose the doctrines, however we deal with the persons that hold them. Nor ought we to be any whit the less earnest to oppose these principles of some that call themselves Protestants, because we have a common enemy to deal with: for the primitive Christians had also two common enemies that opposed their whole religion, and persecuted the professors of it in a most barbarous manner, I mean the Jews and the Gentiles, and yet the Apostles were nevertheless zealous to oppose the doctrines of heretics and seducers, exhorting the true professors to "contend earnestly for the faith which was "once delivered to the Saints;"* and that, not because they had those open and avowed enemies to Christianity in general, who publicly opposed and persecuted the Church of God; but because there were "certain men crept in amongst them "unawares, who turned the grace of God into

* Jud. ver. 3. 4.

" lasciviousness, and denied the only Lord God, " and our Lord Jesus Christ." As therefore the Apostles failed not to oppose the common enemies, and to condemn the doctrine of the Jews and Gentiles; so neither did they cease upon all occasions to confute and censure those, who though they made profession of Christianity, yet taught such things as were not consistent with it. And whilst we follow their example, we need not fear losing that *moderation* required in the text, whatever our new pretenders to moderation say to the contrary. We must say, they endeavour to heal the animosities, divisions and dissensions amongst ourselves, by allowing each others opinions, and not be zealous for this or that party, but only shew a firm, a brave and resolute adherence to the Protestant interest throughout the world. As if there were no dangerous principles, no pernicious doctrines maintained by any that go under the name of Protestants. But I hope I have said enough to convince you of the contrary, and therefore let us not be deceived with specious appearances and fair pretences; but let men call themselves by what name they please, if they broach damnable heresies, I am sure we ought not to side with them, and to say they have done no wickedness in this particular. We must not, we dare not be moderate, that is, indifferent in such things as these: if we should be so, we may justly fear the judgment wherewith God threatened the

Angel of the Church of Laodicea, who was, it seems, a moderate man; that is, a man who had no great zeal for, or care of that Church over which he presided, and fancied that God was pleased with his being so, because he found himself blessed, as he imagined by this means, he had gotten preferment, and was grown rich by it. And this is just as our moderate men plead now for themselves, we are the rich men, the trading men of the nation, would God bless us thus if our ways pleased him not? But let us hear what God says to such trimming: "I know thy works, that thou "art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert "cold or hot. So then because thou art luke-"warm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee "out of my mouth. Because thou sayest I am "rich, and increased with goods, and have need "of nothing; and knowest not that thou art "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind "and naked."* We see then that this kind of moderation, this trimming in religion, this lukewarmness and want of zeal for the faith we profess, is odious in the sight of God. And I believe, if we enquire, we shall find it so in the sight of man too. For who can have any real value for that man, who is not firm to what he professes? Who, indeed, appears to be a Churchman, but nevertheless thinks that all the dissenters are in as good

* Rev. iii. 15.

and fair a way to Heaven, and therefore he can join in communion with any of them: who believes that if he do but rail heartily at Popery, that it is perfectly indifferent what other Church he sides with. But though this kind of moderation, which is perfectly opposite to that zeal, which the Scriptures press to, be now so much in vogue; yet if men would but give themselves leave to think, they could not believe it to be a virtue, how much soever some cry it up for one. Would any one, think you, believe himself commended, if it should be said that he is a moderate or indifferent lover of God, his country, or his friends? Would he not be much better pleased to be called an hearty zealous lover of all these? How then can the name of a moderate, indifferent Churchman be honourable? If our Church be good, we ought to love it heartily, and seek its welfare with zeal and earnestness: but if it be bad, we ought not to love it at all. So that be it how it will, a moderate indifferent love for it is no way justifiable.

II. Secondly, As the Scriptures require us to be zealous and not moderate, with relation to our faith, so also they require the same, with regard to the Unity of the Church, to our living in communion one with another, and avoiding all divisions and separations one from another. "Now "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our "Lord Jesus Christ," says St. Paul, "that ye all

" speak the same thing, and that there be no " divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly " joined together in the same mind, and in the " same judgment."* Now what were these divisions which St. Paul here speaks of? They were not any contentions about the faith, but only some little trifling matters, as which of their pastors ought chiefly to be followed, whose congregation they should join themselves to, whether that of Paul, or of Apollos, or of Cephas. Not that these three had any difference between themselves, or that one of them taught any doctrine contrary to the other, or that they separated in communion one from another, but only some factious persons took occasion to abuse their names to countenance their own divisions: and St. Paul in condemning this abuse, was willing to spare the persons who had caused it, as being minded to see if they would be brought to a better temper without it. Wherefore he says, that " in a figure he trans- " ferred these things to himself, and to Apollos."† As though he had said, since our names have been abused by some of you upon this occasion, and that there are amongst you some, that boast you are followers of Paul, and not of Apollos, and others, that they are followers of Apollos, and not of Paul, I am willing to name no other persons at this time, but supposing it be so, that some of

* 1 Cor. i. 10. † Ibid. iv. 6.

you were converted by one of us, and some by the other, I would have you know that this ought to make no difference amongst you; but that you should still join in one and the same communion, and "not be puffed up for one against another," nor break out into factions upon this account, to the despising of one another.

After this, he shews how the Unity of the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, is to be preserved, by comparing it with the natural body. For, says he, "as the body is one and "hath many members, and all the members of "that one body being many, are one body; so "also is Christ."* As therefore the members of the natural body must be united to one another to preserve the body entire; so must the members of Christ continue in union one with another, or else his mystical body will be maimed: for this is a natural consequence of this comparison. And as he adds, "God has tempered the body to-"gether," giving to every member, even to the most feeble and least honourable parts, their proper office, "to the end," says he, "that there "should be no schism in the body; but that the "members should have the same care one for "another." Then by subjoining, "now ye are "the body of Christ and members in particular," he plainly intimates, that in this mystical body,

* 1 Cor. x. 10.

the Church, there ought to be no separation of interests, no divisions or dissentions from one another, but that all should have the same common interest and concern, "endeavouring to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of "peace."* And, to convince us of the absolute necessity of studying to preserve this union, he shews us, that without this love of charity for the body of Christ, all other gifts and graces are of no value, so that the understanding "all mysteries "and all knowledge," the having "a faith able "to remove mountains," if it want this love or charity to the body of Christ, "it profiteth no-"thing." And he, who seeks to separate and divide this body, is an enemy to Christ, the head of it, "though he speak with the tongues of men "and of angels." Wherefore the Apostle prays for the Romans, that they may be "like-minded "one towards another, according to Christ Je-"sus."† And exhorts the Philippians, to "be "like-minded, having the same love, being of one "accord, of one mind."‡ And our Saviour in the last prayer he made for us before he was betrayed, begged that we might be preserved in unity, saying, "Holy Father, keep through thine "own name those whom thou hast given me, that "they may be one as we are."§ And now, can it be thought that Christian moderation should

* Eph. iv. 3. † Rom. xv. 5. ‡ Phil. ii. 2. § Joh. xvii. 11.

oblige us to join with, or to countenance, those who destroy this union which Christ so earnestly prayed might be preserved? That we should adhere to, or abet such party-makers as tear and rent the body of Christ, by separating the members of it one against another? Our new fashioned moderate men pretend indeed, that they would take away these causeless divisions, that they desire to heal these wounds of the Church, and that they take the right method for it; which is, not to stand stiff for ceremonies, nor contend with a weak brother for indifferent matters, but to yield to them, and comply with them in these things. And to shew their readiness to comply with them, they will sometimes go to their meetings, and join with them in their way of worship: at other times, and upon occasion, they will come to the established Church and communicate with us. And this, say they, is the way to make both one, and a most certain token of their great moderation. But will the countenancing two separate parties, and the making them believe that we think them both to be in the right, ever unite them? Will the dissenters be brought to conform to the Church, by seeing the Churchmen coming over to their side? Or will the Church think it reasonable to yield to the dissenters, when they see the dissenters can, upon occasion, and without making any scruple of it, join with us in all parts of divine worship? May we not justly say to them, if

you think our communion to be sinful, why do you communicate with us at all? If it be not sinful, and you can join with us, why do you make a causeless division, and rent the seamless coat of Christ, when you are forced to own there is no just occasion for it? We may very well say to these moderate churchmen, or moderate dissenters, that divide themselves between one side and the other, and keep stedfast to neither, what Elijah said to the Israelites on the like occasion, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If "the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, "then follow him.*" If the dissenters are the true church of Christ, follow them: if the established religion be Christ's true church, follow that. It is certain, both cannot be in the right; for Christ cannot be divided any more than the natural body; and St. Paul has taught us, that "as the body is one, so also is Christ." Now there is certainly a division between us, we are separated the one from the other, we cannot therefore be both of us sound uncorrupt members of the same body. He therefore who trims between both, must necessarily be corrupt on one side or the other. The man who keeps firm and stedfast to one, may possibly be in the right, but he that halts between both must certainly be in the wrong. There is a plain apparent schism between us, and consequently, one party must be

* 1 Kings, xviii. 21.

schismatical. He therefore that joins indifferently with both sides, undoubtedly countenances the schism, on which side soever it lies, and consequently is a schismatic, or an abetter of divisions in the Christian Church, whosoever else is not one. I shall not here concern myself about the dissenters opinions, wherein they differ from us, for we should have nothing to say against them, if they did not form a schism. We would never fall out with a man, whether a black gown or a cloak was the most decent habit, provided he would make no disturbance about it, and not gather a separate congregation upon such a trifling matter. For men may differ and argue about opinions, without either breach of charity, or of the unity of the Church, which requires not that all should be of the same opinion, but of the same communion. And for this unity in communion, we ought to be zealous and not moderate, for the tearing Christ's body can be no indifferent matter. But our moderate men, as they love to be called, tell us, that we and those dissenters they join with, are all one in substantials, and that we differ only in a few little needless and indifferent ceremonies, and to let us see that they account this difference to be no ways material, they think they may go indifferently either to church or meetings. But if the difference be so little, why is there a separation? Why can we not agree all of us to worship God in the same way? Why do these

dissenters, which think our communion lawful, come and draw away our members from us? Why do they form distinct congregations, and quit their legal pastors? And do not they which go to these meetings, though but occasionally, countenance this separation and division, which they are forced to own to be needless, and without just cause? If the terms of our communion are not sinful, it is certainly a damnable sin, for those who are of this opinion to separate, or to countenance and uphold such a separation, for they maintain and support a division and schism, in the church of Christ, without any just cause given for it. But if our way of worship be sinful, it is a damnable sin to join so much as once in our communion. So that the moderate man, who halts between the church and the meeting-house, is guilty of a damnable sin, which side soever is in the right. This kind of moderation then, which is now so fashionable and so much cried up, cannot be the moderation required by St. Paul in the text: for that apostle would certainly never exhort us to any thing that is sinful.

Having thus shewn you, what *true moderation* is, that it consists in kindness, gentleness, patience, readiness to forgive, mildness, impartiality, modesty, and humility, towards all persons whatsoever, but that it is by no means to be extended to that indifferency in religion, to which some would apply it. Provided therefore, that it be not

wrested to the prejudice of the true faith and of the communion of the church, I will go as far as any in extending it to other matters and persons. In order to which, I will now briefly shew,

II. Secondly, how our moderation should be made known unto all men. And this is to be done not by shewing an indifferency towards our religion, but by shewing ourselves kind to all men whatsoever, and what religion soever they are of. We ought always carefully to distinguish betwixt the vice and the man, and howsoever we are to abominate and hate the one, we must be nevertheless ready upon all occasions to do good to the other. Is such a one a profane, lewd vicious liver, let us detest the profaneness, but still let us not detest the man. Let us endeavour what we are able, and as far as we have opportunity, to reclaim him from his vice, but let us not be vicious with him to shew our moderation that way. So also is any one an heretic or a schismatic; let us hate the heresy and loath the schism, but let us not hate or loath the persons guilty of it. Let us if we can study to reduce them and bring them back into the way of truth and of righteousness, but let us not to shew our moderation become heretical or schismatical with them: let us not join with them in their divisions, nor unite ourselves to their separate assemblies: let us study to do good to their persons, but let us pray still against their wickedness: let our moderation be made

known to them by our readiness to do them all acts of charity and good nature; if they need our help or assistance let us freely and cheerfully afford it them: let us relieve their wants, and contribute to their necessities according as we have opportunity and ability. If they are naked let us cloth them, if hungry let us feed them, if athirst let us give them drink, and let them see that we want no bowels of charity or compassion for them, howsoever we dislike their ways, and disapprove their deeds and practises. Our Saviour has taught us in one of his excellent parables, that difference in religion should by no means make a difference in our charity and compassion. When the traveller who went from Jerusalem to Jericho fell amongst thieves and was grievously wounded and severely handled by them, the good Samaritan though of a different religion shewed all the care and kindness to him that he was able, when the priest and the Levite who saw his distress and anguish passed by him without any regard or compassion, he "went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring "in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, "and brought him to an inn, and took care of "him: and on the morrow when he departed, he "took out two-pence and gave them to the host, "and said unto him, take care of him, and what-"soever thou spendest more, when I come again "I will repay thee."* Now this Samaritan was

* Luk. x. 30.

a man of so different a religion from the traveller, that they would not so much as trade or have any commerce with one another upon the account of that difference in their way of worship; "for "the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans."* And it is our Lord's command that we should do as this Samaritan did. But though our Saviour recommended this pious charitable act of the good Samaritan, he was far from recommending his religion to us: for he plainly told the woman of Samaria, that "they worshipped they knew not "what."† By all which I think our Saviour has evidently instructed us how to express our moderation. Not by complying with dissenters in their different principles from us, but by not letting such different principles lessen our bowels of compassion towards them. That our moderation therefore may be made known unto all men, we must, by our constant practice and behaviour towards all, let every one see that we do not confine our equal fair dealing, our love or charity, our kindness, meekness, gentleness, forbearance, patience, readiness to forgive, our modesty and humility to those of our own persuasion or party, but that we are still ready to "do good to all "men, but especially to them who are of the "household of faith."‡ That though our first care and concern be for those whom we judge the truest and most faithful servants of Christ; yet

* Joh. iv. 9. † Joh. iv. 22. ‡ Gal. vi. 10.

we shall never be wanting to do all good offices to those who differ from us, according as our occasions and our abilities will permit. And as our moderation is to be made known by our equal fair dealing, and our love and charity towards all men, how different soever their persuasions may be in matters of religion; so also should we shew it by bearing with a weak brother in private opinions which neither affect the true faith of Christ, nor the unity of the church, such as those mentioned by St. Paul, "one believeth he may eat all things; "another who is weak eateth herbs. One man "esteemeth one day above another; another es- "teemeth every day alike."* These were no other than private scruples concerning such things, as neither Christ nor his church had made any determination, but had left them as they were, perfectly indifferent, and so every man was at liberty to judge for himself what he ought to do in these matters. In these therefore, and such like doctrines which neither one way or other prejudice the faith or unity of the church, the apostle has expressly declared, that we should not judge or censure one another; but as we take our own liberty, so let us leave others to enjoy theirs. But the case is very different with relation to such things, as either Christ or his church have determined, however indifferent they may be thought in their own nature. For as to what St. Paul here

* Rom. iv. 14.

speaks of, "esteeming every day alike," which he puts down as an indifferent opinion, which we ought not to dispute or contend about; shall we extend this to the observation of the Lord's day, which the church has from the apostles' times set apart, and dedicated to the particular service of God? I suppose none will urge this text of scripture, to excuse any who shall refuse to observe it. Again, let us shew our moderation to all, by our gentle behaviour towards those who differ from us even in fundamentals. And howsoever zealous we are for the preservation of the faith, and the peace of the church, let us still reason with them, and endeavour to "restore "them in the spirit of meekness."* Let us "not "bring against them railing accusations,"† lest that serve but to provoke them, and drive them, if it be possible, further from us. Let us bear long with them, and endeavour to reduce them to the fold from whence they are strayed by all the methods of mildness, of love and charity. Let them see that we have a most tender care and compassion for them, and that we desire to pull them out of that fire into which they have run themselves by departing from us.‡ But as the apostle says, we are in this case "to make a dif-"ference." We must distinguish the best we can, between those who are led away through ignorance, and those who offend of malicious wicked-

* Gal. vi. 1. † Jud. v. 9. ‡ Jud. v. 22.

ness. For as there are some who are seduced by the prejudices of an unhappy education, or through want of knowledge, which has made them apt to be drawn aside by the specious pretences and fair speeches of cunning deceivers, so as they have not been able to see the wolf through his sheep's cloathing, and these should be gently treated, and the errors of their ways should be shewed to them in the mildest manner; so there are others whom the apostle calls, "evil beasts, always liars, "who must be rebuked sharply."* Te conclude therefore, "let our moderation be known to all "men,"* not by our compliance with them in their separations and divisions, but by our meekness, our kindness, our charity and gentle behaviour towards all; not by our running with them into their errors, but by endeavouring to reduce them from the error of their ways, that they may be saved in the day of the Lord. By shewing a true affection both to their bodies and their souls, though we can have none either for their principles or practices. And howsoever men may censure or condemn *this moderation*, as contrary to the moderation now in vogue, we may be satisfied that God will accept of it, since it is agreeable to his most holy word and commandment. And having done our duty herein, we may be assured, that we shall not fail of a reward at the last day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom with the Father, &c.

* Tit. i. 21, 13.

AN ESSAY CONCERNING CIVIL GOVERNMENT, CONSIDERED AS IT STANDS RELATED TO RELIGION,

WHEREIN

THE MAGISTRATE'S RIGHT TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE TRUE RELIGION BY HUMAN LAWS IS ASSERTED, AGAINST THE MODERN PLEADERS FOR AN ABSOLUTE, UNRESTRAINED TOLERATION.

BY HENRY STEBBING, M.A.

PREFACE.

THE late controversies having led me to consider the question concerning the magistrate's authority in matters of religion, I now offer my thoughts of it to the world. The usefulness of the subject must be my apology for publishing them now: and the difficulty of it, my excuse for not publishing them sooner. The one may invite the attention of the reader; the other certainly demands great caution and circumspection in the writer: and if by delaying I have gained this advantage, that the book comes out the more perfect; I may likewise hope that, the heat of contention being now pretty well over, it may be read with the more calmness and impartiality.

There are two different ways in which this point may be handled. One considers the magistrate's authority as it is originally in itself, or abstracted from all limitations which revelation may have introduced: the other considers it as relative to the authority of the church, which, though it does not destroy the magistrate's authority, does yet direct it in many cases, where religion is concerned. I confine myself at present to the first of these, and in treating about it, have set down nothing but what appears to me to flow from evident principles of reason, and the general experience of the world. I mean not here to promise demonstration: you must expect none, because the subject will admit of none. The question is, *What course must the magistrate take to support and encourage true religion;* for which he that should presume to lay down an universal, infallible method, would deserve no other regard than a pretender who boasts that he has found out a never-failing remedy to cure all diseases. All we can say is, that is the best method which will do most good: and in judging even of this, so much will always depend upon the tempers and dispositions of men (which can be reduced to no certain rule) that perhaps it lies not within the reach of the wisest man on earth, to say, with assurance, precisely what it is. Room then here will be for cavilling, to those who are best pleased with finding fault. But to those who are disposed to judge equitably,

and will accept of such proof as the nature of the thing will allow, I do not despair of giving this reasonable satisfaction; that if I shew them not the best method, I shew them a good one, or at least a better than those writers have shewn, who tell us, that the best thing the magistrate can do in this case, is to do nothing.

After all, I am sensible, that the ensuing tract is so disproportionate to what the subject might very well bear, that I venture not to give it any higher title than that of an *Essay*; which I should be glad to see corrected or improved by any, who know how to profit either by what they like in it, or by what they do not.

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING shewn, in a former treatise, what are the proper methods of supporting Christianity, so far as it concerns the governors of the church; I now proceed to consider the same point as it has relation to the office of the civil magistrate. As the motive which led me to the former was the vindication of our ecclesiastical constitution; so that which determines me to the latter, is the justification of our civil establishment, which hath the same adversaries to deal with: those who have represented the one as destructive of the Christian liberty, having also represented the other as an encroachment upon civil right and property, and

no less an invasion upon the prerogative of Christ. To say the truth, this seems to be the most material part of the controversy: not only as it is of a more nice and intricate nature; but because the right it pleads for seems to have made the most sensible impression upon the spirits of those who have of late appeared against us with so much bitterness. For I can easily persuade myself that the church might have been let alone in her claims of spiritual powers, if, by the favour of the State, she had not been vested with civil privileges.

I shall not pretend, in this place, to give the reader an exact draught of this new scheme. If any one can want it after so much has been written upon the subject, he will be able to frame one for himself, when he has viewed it in its main branches, the consideration of which is the design of the following discourse. It needs only to be remarked, that the exception lies, not so much against any thing that is peculiar in our legal establishment, as against all such establishments in general; *i. e.* it lies against all right in the magistrate to support religion by his civil authority. I wonder not that those, who (if one might judge by their conduct) seem to be for making a full end of the church, should leave her as little support from without, as they have left her from within: but surely it must appear very unaccountable to any thinking man, that in a point of so much consequence, the whole world should so long have

been mistaken. For that it is the concern of every civil magistrate to promote God's true religion, is a maxim as old as religion and civil government. The methods of attempting it have indeed been different, in different ages, and in different countries: but as to the thing in general, all nations have agreed in it, and all *writers have justified it. But I do not expect that the point should be decided by authorities, which our modern schemists, as if they were raised up by Providence to be the great reformers of common sense, have long since learned to despise. I will bring the case to the bar of reason: and if this maxim can be made good, it is to be hoped that Christianity may come in for its share in the benefits of it, and our legislators may appear to have deserved another kind of treatment than they have lately met with, on account of the privileges allowed us. But if not, we ought to be as ready to give up these privileges, as others are desirous that they should be given up: for Christianity must not be supported, nor does it indeed want to be supported, by any methods that are not justifiable.

* Omnes qui de republicâ aliquid lectu dignum scripsêre, jus in sacra non partem tantum summi imperii, sed etiam potissimam atque præcipuam vocant. Grotius, De Imp. Sum. Pot. cap. 1, sect. 8. Again: Nullâ in re magis elucescit vis summi imperii, quàm quòd in ejus arbitrio est, quænam religio publicè exerceatur; idque præcipuum inter majestatis jura, ponunt omnes qui politica scripserunt. Ibid. cap. 8, sect. 2.

CHAP. I.

WHETHER IT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE MAGISTRATE, BY THE METHODS OF CIVIL ADMINISTRATION, TO PROMOTE THE INTEREST OF GOD'S TRUE RELIGION.

THE general point being now stated, it will be necessary, as a preliminary to the whole, to resolve one very material question: *viz.* Whether it be possible in the nature of the thing, for the magistrate by the methods of civil administration to promote the interest of God's true religion? It has of late been very strenuously maintained that it is not: and if this be true, the dispute is at an end: it being absurd to suppose that any thing should be a matter of right or duty in the civil magistrate, which in the nature of things is absolutely out of his power. Now the foundation of this notion is this; that the magistrate, * *by all he can do,* CAN only influence the *outward behaviour* and *practice.* Whereas, say they, true religion consists not merely in any external conformity to any particular way of worship, even though that way be of divine appointment; but it consists in a conformity to the law of God, upon a true inward principle, *i. e.* upon a principle of obedience to God, under * the influence of the motives of a

* See Answer to the Representation, p. 160, 167, 172, 173, 179.

* Ibid. p. 173, and in many other places.

life to come. Whether the being influenced by the motives of a life to come be essential to the notion of true religion, I shall not now stay to inquire; because which way soever this point be determined, it cannot alter the state of the question between us. That a true inward principle is essential to it there can be no doubt; and consequently it must be granted that if it be not in the magistrate's power to encourage and promote this inward principle, it is not in his power to promote true religion. This difference therefore, I say, must first of all be decided; in doing which I must beg the liberty of pursuing that method which appears to me to be most natural, promising my reader not to omit taking notice of every material objection as it falls in my way.

Religion then, I say, in the sense in which it is now to be considered, must be founded, 1. In the knowledge of the divine will. And 2. In a due apprehension of the weight of those motives, by which it becomes reasonable that God should be obeyed in whatever he commands us. For he who understands his duty and practises it because it is so, *i. e.* because he judges it to be fitting and reasonable, is in the most complete and perfect sense a religious man. Now the immediate, adequate, cause of the former (in those cases where our own reason alone is not able to direct us) is instruction; for what we cannot learn of ourselves, we must be taught by the informa-

tion of others. But to the latter, something more is required. For a man may know his duty well, and yet for want of due attention to what he understands, be very negligent in the performance of it. From hence therefore it follows; that if, by the methods of civil administration the magistrate may provide either that instruction in the knowledge of God's true religion be the better administered; or that when duly administered it may have the greater weight and influence upon the minds of men; it must then be possible for the magistrate to promote the interest of God's true religion. And that he may provide for both is as plain to me as any thing can be. For he may provide for the better administration of instruction in the true religion. 1. By providing a proper maintenance for the teachers of true religion. 2. By endowing public schools, and other seminaries of good learning, and religious education. Which ways will become yet more effectual, 3. By prohibiting the same methods, when they shall be made use of to support any false religion, in opposition to the true. I inquire not now, how far all this is right and fitting: this must be considered in another place. And it is a caution which I must desire the reader constantly to bear in his mind, that my business under this head is to shew, not what the magistrate may do in the notion of justice, but what he may do in the notion of natural possibility. In this sense then, I say,

it is evident that the magistrate may, by the several ways above-mentioned, provide for the better administration of instruction: the tendency of which, since it is not merely to regulate the outward behaviour, but also, and that primarily, to direct the understanding to that true knowledge of God, which lays the foundation of a religious principle; that must therefore be false which hath been maintained absolutely and without reserve, *viz.* that the magistrate *by all he can do*, CANNOT promote true religion, nor any more than influence the outward behaviour. It would be ridiculous here to allege that the true religion under this state of the case, is promoted by those who instruct, and not by the magistrate. The direct, immediate cause without doubt is, and must be, instruction. But then the magistrate, through whose means instruction is administred, concurs to it as a principal, though more remote, instrument: which is all that any one means or can mean, when he speaks of the magistrate's power to promote religion by the methods of civil administration.

This point being duly attended to, the reader will very easily perceive how far the reasoning of our adversaries upon this head, comes short of the matter under consideration. For how does it appear that it is not in the magistrate's power, by all he can do, to promote true religion, nor any more than to influence the outward behaviour?

Why the substance of all that has been said amounts to thus much, and no more; to wit, that the motives of this world (*i. e.* the honours and profits of this world on the one hand, and the hardships and inconveniencies of this world on the other) can no more than influence the outward behaviour. That is to say (for this is what they mean) if you want to bring a man over to, or keep him stedfast in, the true religion; the proposing to him, *v. g.* a place at court if he complies, or laying him under certain penalties if he refuses, cannot reach his heart so as to make him truly religious, though it may occasion an outward conformity. But what is this to the purpose, supposing it to be true? I hope for all this, that good salaries may procure good schoolmasters; and good benefices sound and orthodox pastors, who, it is likely, may think it their business to tell those who are under their care, not how to get great estates, but how to become wise and good; and may lead them to their duties, not by applying the motives of this world, but by enforcing the motives of a life to come. In considering the use of worldly motives with regard to religion, we must not attend merely to the effects they will have upon those who are under the immediate advantages, or disadvantages of them. We must extend our thoughts to those effects also, which they will produce remotely upon others, which (as will be shewn more fully afterwards) are of far the greater consequence. If I

pay a man a yearly stipend for instructing my child, what I give is the purchase of his labour, skill, and industry; and the scholar may surely make a good use of what he learns, though the master makes a bad one of what he receives. In like manner, if a good benefice has no tendency to beget a right faith in the preacher; no man will be so absurd as to say that his doctrine (supposing it to be as it ought) has no tendency to inform the understandings, and regulate the manners of his hearers. As this is a consideration obvious enough of itself; so it is by much too material to have been overlooked by the late writers in this controversy. But it will be proper to pursue the point yet farther, and to consider the effect of worldly motives, even upon those who are immediately under the influence of them; by which it will more fully appear, how little truth there is in what has been laid down with so much assurance, *viz.* that temporal rewards and punishments have no tendency to beget any thing more than a mere external conformity. We have been told (and by the way, we have only been told) that * *it is not in the power of men by* ALL *the good things of this world put together, to encourage religion in the* ESSENTIALS *of it,* or (as it is expressed a little after) *to create the inward essentials of religion.* That † *the effect of worldly motives is* NONE AT ALL *towards*

* See Answer to the Representation, p. 149, 150.

† Ibid, p. 170.

any thing but OUTWARD BEHAVIOUR *and* PROFESSION; and that * *worldly sanction* NEVER *made* ANY ONE *man* TRULY *religious.* These are strong terms; and if the meaning of them be that temporal motives are not disposed by any direct immediate efficacy to beget the inward essentials of religion; the thing is indeed too plain to admit of any deliberation. But it will answer the purpose every whit as well, if indirectly or by any remote efficacy they may operate this way: and if our adversaries mean to deny this; it will become them, however, to be less positive till they can find some good reason to support their opinion. For in this sense so far is it from being true, that temporal motives never made any one man truly religious; that by God's grace they have made many so: and I look upon them to be very proper means in the magistrate's hand to secure the good effect of instruction, whilst they are a bridle to men's passions, and give a seasonable check to that carelessness and inconsiderateness which unqualifies them to receive the impressions of truth and virtue. This effect of worldly motives is easy enough to be discerned in other cases, where men's private views are not so nearly concerned; that is, where the spirit of a party, which is for the most part the spirit of contradiction, hath not blinded their eyes. A father, for instance, applies temporal motives in the management of his child. To what end? Is

* See Answer to the Representation, p. 213.

it merely to regulate the outward behaviour? No surely; a sensible man will certainly answer in such a case, that it is with a design to mend his manners and make him good. This I must own were a foolish pretence upon our adversaries scheme: but as foolish as it is, he that was wiser than the wisest of them all, has told us that *the rod of reproof giveth wisdom.* How so? Is wisdom the effect of force? Has bodily pleasure or bodily pain any tendency to convince the understanding and reform the heart? Whether it will be born or not, I shall make bold to appear on the part of Solomon and say, yes. But how? Why, not that the smart of the rod can reach the conscience; nor that the sugar-cake which the child eats digests itself into a religious principle: but the case is (as I said just now) that by this method you apply to the passions and compose those inward tumults, which, so long as they prevail, obstruct the influences of natural light, and by consequence stop the way to true wisdom and virtue. This I say is the proper effect of worldly motives: not that they do of themselves beget true religion; but that they put men into a fit temper and disposition to receive it: not that they are at all proper to convince; but that they remove those impediments by which men are rendered uncapable of conviction.

The reader will doubtless take notice, that the application of temporal motives is supposed to be attended with that from which indeed it ought

never to be separated, to wit, the use of the proper means of conviction. And after this hint there is nothing I conceive in this account but what any man of a tolerable capacity may easily understand. It will be vain here to allege, that though this method be proper with respect to children, it may not be so with respect to men. For so far as men are governed by passion and not by reason, so far they degenerate into children; and so far therefore it must be proper to deal with them as such. The propriety of this method results not from any thing by which a perverse child is distinguishable from an unreasonable man; but from something which, in a greater or in a lesser degree, is common to them both. That in which a perverse child differs from an unreasonable man, is this; that he hath a less measure of understanding: but in this they both agree, that the one is led by his passions to contradict that measure of understanding which he has as well as the other. Now the same disease under a like constitution naturally calls for the same remedy: and since in both cases it is by the motives of this world that our passions rise into mutiny and become a party against the truth; the same sort of motives contrarily applied must also in both cases be the proper means of reducing them into order. What reason suggests to us upon this head, experience also verifies. For has any one so little knowledge, or so little charity as to say, that there

have not been many instances of men, as well as of children, who, by wholesome severities or seasonable encouragements, have been reclaimed from evil courses? Has no one either seen or heard of a malefactor, who, whilst under sentence of condemnation, has been brought to a better mind? Though such cases are not so frequent as one would wish; yet I trust in God, and we have, I think, great reason to believe that the world has not wholly been without them. And whence? Why the Ordinary of the place, perhaps you will say, has discharged his duty; or some charitable and well disposed persons have been diligent in applying good advice and sober instruction. It may be so; and who doubts but these are proper and necessary helps to the bringing of sinners to repentance. But let me ask one question or two more? Do you believe that good advice alone would have done the business? Do you not think that the instruction administred received some weight from the condition of the offender; or rather that it was entirely owing to this, that he was found in a fit temper and disposition to be wrought upon by persuasion? These are the points I would propose upon the case before us; and the decision of them I willingly leave to any man of common observation.

If any thing else be wanting to make the argument yet plainer; I desire it may not be forgotten, that God himself is pleased to make use of this

method for the same purpose. That he might the more effectually lead us to the observance of his laws, he hath so ordered it that the breach of them (according to the natural order and constitution of things) is generally attended with the inconveniencies of this world; and in the extraordinary exercise of his Providence, he hath declared this to be the end of his *afflicting and grieving the children of men*, (not to clothe them with a mere outside shew, which he hates and abhors, but) *that they may be partakers of his holiness.* May not then some one expostulate with the Almighty in the modern way of reasoning and say; "Is "holiness the effect of force? Of bodily plea- "sure or of bodily pain? Is it religion to abstain "from drunkenness for fear of surfeiting, or from "whoredom to avoid the rottenness of the bones? "Why then, since thou desirest a free and willing "service, hast thou not left us free? Thou hast "given us a reasonable soul; thou has prescribed "us reasonable laws; thou hast proposed to us "the motives of a life to come, as an encourage- "ment to us to do as we are commanded; and "obedience performed under the influence of "these reasons, and with a view to these motives, "is the only obedience which thou has promised "to accept. Why then dost thou go about to "destroy, as it were, the work of thine own "hands, in proposing to effect that by worldly "motives, which worldly motives can never pro-

"duce?" If our adversaries can tell how to silence this impious and vain babbler, I will undertake, by those very arguments they shall make use of, to answer them. For the case is thus far parallel to the other; that here is the use or application of the motives of this world to this intent, and for this purpose, even the begetting true religion, which is the absurdity they complain of. I know it has been observed that* *when God himself has threatened temporal judgments; the being moved by these as they come from God, is an act of faith in him, and no such worldly inducement as God disapproves of.* But this observation does not reach the whole of the objection, nor is it indeed any thing to the purpose. I say, first, it doth not reach the whole of the objection. For my argument is drawn not only from those evils which are properly the judgments of God upon sinners; but from those inconveniencies which in the order of nature do generally attend upon wicked practices. It is no act of faith for a man to believe, that if he plays the glutton or the drunkard over night he shall be sick the next morning. Yet this is commonly the case; God hath so adjusted the frame of our natures, that we can seldom offend him without bringing down some present mischief upon ourselves: in which dispensation there is certainly less wisdom, not to say goodness, than there would have been, had it otherwise been ordered; if it

* See Answer to the Representation, p. 233.

be true that worldly inconveniencies not only cannot promote, but do even destroy true religion. Again; this argument relates not merely to those judgments of God which are visibly so, and are considered by us as such; but even to those secret acts of his Providence, which we cannot distinguish from those effects which result from the natural order and constitution of things. When God, by a special warning, tells us beforehand (as he told the Ninevites) that we shall be destroyed unless we repent; our repenting, in virtue of this warning, is indeed properly an act of faith, or rather it is the effect of our faith. But, in the ordinary course of his Providence, God chastises us without giving us any certain tokens by which we may know that it is his hand; and although, even in this case, there is room enough for the exercise of faith, (God's general threatnings supplying in some sort the want of a special warning) yet I do not think it to be absolutely necessary to the end propounded, *i. e.* to the amendment of the sinner. If it were, God would have taken care to have given us a sure foundation for it: for he doth not propose an end by insufficient means. If a licentious liver be punished with the loss of his estate; it may be a means of bringing him to sobriety, whether he considers it as a judgment from God, or as a common accident: and in truth that God is the author of the evil we suffer, is, I believe, generally speaking, one of the last thoughts

that is apt to arise in a sinner's breast. That which puts the first stop to his career is the weight of his misfortunes; by which when his heart begins to be mollified and subdued, it is then that he is in a fit temper to look up to the cause from whence they come. This may serve to shew, that the being moved by those worldly inconveniencies which come from God, is not always an act of faith, and consequently that the objection comes thus far short of the argument. But I must observe, secondly, that it is in truth nothing to the purpose. For the question is not whether the being moved by the judgments of God be an act of faith, or not an act of faith; but how they operate. The end which God proposes in afflicting us, is to bring us to repentance. Well; how do afflictions answer this end? Why plainly no otherwise than as they are a bridle to our passions. And thus David speaks from his own experience. *Before I was troubled*, says he, *I went wrong; but now have I kept thy word.* And why? It follows soon after, *I thought on my ways, and I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.* This, I say, is the effect of the inconveniencies of this world, they dispose us to sober thoughts and serious consideration, which the hurry of our passions, whilst they reign without controul, will by no means allow. Either shew then that they can have no such effect when applied by the hand of the magistrate; or no longer pretend, that, when he does apply them,

he makes use of a means improper for the end of true religion.

There are these differences, indeed, to be observed between these two cases, *viz.* first, that when an offender falls under the penalties of human laws, he knows the worst of it, which perhaps he may set at a lower rate than the gratification of his lusts. The punishment may be either small in itself, or being, as to its duration, confined to some determinate period, may administer hopes which will serve to keep the passions alive, and so prevent those good effects which would otherwise ensue. But to the chastisements of God we can ascertain neither measure nor end; for *who knoweth the power of his wrath?* Who can tell how miserable he may think fit to make wicked men, even though we look no farther than the present state of things? Again; secondly, the magistrate can judge only of the outward appearance, but *God searcheth the heart and reins;* the one, therefore, must be satisfied with the mere forbearance of the outward act, whilst the other requires inward purity and sincerity. But these differences will not go so far as to shew that the application of worldly motives is proper in the hand of God, and not so in the hand of man; but only that such motives when considered by the sinner as made use of by God, will work an inward reformation more certainly, than when they are applied by the civil magistrate. He who looks upon himself as

under the chastisement of God, and wishes for deliverance, must bring himself to a sincere repentance, because nothing less will be sufficient: whereas he who would avoid civil penalties, may be a sinner in his heart, if so be he takes care to avoid those actions which the law punishes. But it is to be considered that the mere forbearance of the outward act, though in itself it is not true virtue, is yet a very good step towards it; and that even the judgments of God can operate no other way, than by suppressing the outward act, upon those who discern not the hand of his Providence, which (as I just now observed) is the case of most sinners, especially till they have made some advances in the work of reformation. The licentious liver, who is punished with the loss of his estate, whilst he considers it only as a common accident, is wrought upon no otherwise than as hereby that fuel is withdrawn, which ministred to the inflaming his lusts and appetites. Now if this contributes any thing towards the begetting inward purity; I can thus far see no difference, whether it be done by the hand of God or by the hand of man. How light some men make of the mere forbearance of the outward act I am not insensible. But when I consider how certain and necessary a tendency the indulgence of one's self in wicked practices has to corrupt the mind, and bring on an habitual disposition to evil; I cannot but think that it would be the greatest security in

the world to sobriety and good manners, if there could be a law, that just so much as a man consumes in luxury and intemperance, just so much he should be obliged to pay yearly into the public treasury.

I have instanced chiefly in the case of punishment, because (as a very judicious* writer has well observed) *the annexing positive rewards to good actions is a case which rarely happens, and the very attempt to do it would for the most part be ridiculous. The magistrate encourages sobriety, by punishing drunkenness; religion and piety, by punishing irreligion and profaneness; obedience to his laws, by punishing disobedience.* But yet, to consider the efficacy of rewards will not be altogether improper, because though it is not usual for the magistrate to ascertain rewards to good actions by any positive law; yet he very frequently does that which amounts to as much, *i. e.* he bestows posts of honour and profit to some particular subjects so or so qualified, with regard to religion: this, I say, though it doth not strictly come under the notion of a reward given for the sake, and on the account of such qualifications (it being only the assigning such posts to those persons who are supposed to be best qualified to fill them, and who upon other accounts have deserved well of their country;) yet it will ordinarily have the same effect, and therefore may be considered as such. There is

* Dean Sherlock's Considerations, p. 28.

then this difference between temporal rewards when propounded by God, and when propounded by man, *viz.* that in the former case they have a direct tendency to beget the love of God, *i. e.* true religion, which in the latter it must be confessed they have not. For when God promises temporal good things to encourage us to obedience; we are hereby led to consider him as our benefactor, and are taught to love him because he hath made it for our interest to serve him. But when temporal good things are propounded by men, as a reward to religion; we then consider men as our friends, and we many times think it enough to please them, whom, by the mere shadow of religion, we can easily deceive, even though we do not please God, who is not to be imposed upon by outward appearances. But still they have the same remote, indirect tendency to promote true religion, that punishments have. For men are no more willing to be debarred of present good than they are to endure present evil; and therefore the one must be a proper means to restrain those passions, which would, if left to themselves, lead us from our duty, and to awaken our consideration, as well as the other.

From the practical duties of religion which I have hitherto principally had in my view, let us now proceed to the speculative; to which, it is easy to see, that the general principles upon which I build may readily be applied. For nothing is

more plain from common observation, than that the same depravity of mind, which leads men into wicked practices, does also very frequently lead them into erroneous opinions. This is more especially true with regard to the doctrines of revealed religion: the evidence whereof (as I have observed at large upon* another occasion) not coming with the same degree of force, wherewith natural truths usually present themselves to the mind (because we see it through a great variety of mediums) may easily be lost where passion and prejudice intervene to obstruct its influence. To become a Christian, there is no need that a man should be foolishly credulous, because there is enough in the evidence upon which the Gospel stands, to satisfy the mind of any fair and reasonable inquirer. But then there is great need of a meek and a tractable disposition; since this evidence will not force the assent of those who are not willing to learn. This then, I say, opens to us the way clearly to discern, how the applying the motives of this world on the side of the true faith, will support and increase the true faith; to wit, as it is a means to take off the weight of those prejudices, which bias the judgments and understandings of men, and to create both a willingness to learn and a readiness to yield, when the proper means of conviction are laid before them. That which prejudices men against the faith, is commonly some worldly interest or

* Operations of the Spirit, chap. 3, § 6, 7, 8.

other which presents itself in opposition to it: the proper remedy therefore to this evil (till there is room for a better) will be to place truth and interest in the same view, which, if it doth not end in conviction (as for want of abilities to judge sometimes it may not), will yet have this certain good effect, that men will neither foolishly reject, nor wantonly depart from it. They will not so easily indulge caprice and humour, nor lend a willing ear to those who preach new and strange doctrines: they will be rather apt to catch at very small advantages, than to neglect great and weighty opportunities. I speak this upon supposition that the methods made use of by the public for the support and encouragement of the true faith, be of weight sufficient to overbalance all separate views: for if it be so (which sometimes happens) that a greater interest is to be served by adhering to a party, the public methods must so far lose their effect: for then in truth the motives of this world will not lye for the true religion but against it. But admitting this exception, the case will be as I have stated it; and who does not see that this is a very great point gained in favour of the true religion, who considers that prejudice is the great source of error; and that there are very few who reject or depart from the truth through the fault of their understandings, comparatively to the number of those who are led aside by the prevalency of their fleshy appetites.

I am well aware that this way of reasoning supposes men to be under such a general sense of religion, as to think it to be their duty to inquire seriously which, among the various ways of worship practised in the world, is that of which God best approves; and consequently that it cannot affect those who are so absolutely careless, as to be ready to profess any that their temporal interest invites them to, without considering whether it be right or wrong. But then it is to be taken notice, that the case of this sort of men (whilst they continue to be such) will be the very same under every method. The proposal of worldly motives does not make them careless, but finds them so; and as they do now profess the true religion because worldly interest is on its side; so if all religions were alike in this respect, they would profess none. The annexing therefore the motives of this world to the true religion, if it does them no good, it does them at least no harm: for if a man be absolutely unconcerned about God and religion, his being a mere outside professor cannot make him a worse man, than he would be if he had made no profession of religion at all. But his being a professor of the true religion may be the means of making him a better: for, by being thus brought within the verge of instruction, he may, through God's blessing, be brought to a sense of his duty, and come to worship him, not as he does now, for fashion and interest sake, but with the sincerity of

an honest mind. Cases of this sort have not unfrequently happened. Men who have come to church, for instance, at first, perhaps, only to oblige their friends, or to avoid the scandal of irreligion or singularity; being won over by the preaching of the Word, have, in time, been heartily reconciled both to religion and to our communion. Now in such a case, it will not, I suppose, be pretended that a man's religion is ever the worse; any more than it will be said that a child reads his book the worse, because he was at first awed to it by the rod, or bribed by a toy.

The reader now sees by what way the motives of this world, when applied on the side of true religion, will advance the interest of true religion, both as to the opinions and practices of those who are directly and immediately under the influence of such motives. And the way in a few words is this, that they minister to the weaknesses and infirmities of men, and serve as a counterpoise to those carnal or worldly motives on the other side, which would lead them from truth or a good conscience. Those who imagine (if any such there are) that even this influence of worldly motives destroys all religion, are casuists who understand neither themselves nor the reason of things. I am very free to allow that what is done merely upon a worldly view, (*i. e.* without any inward sense of duty) has nothing at all of religion in it: but if, by the application of worldly motives, men are brought

to so much consideration as to see the reasonableness of what they do, they shall be thought, I hope, to do a reasonable service. For, in this case, the motives of this world are not the immediate principle of action, but the remote occasion of it: they are to be considered not as the proper cause, but as the means under which the proper cause operates; which, it is plain, cannot so far influence the effect as to alter the nature of it. A man indeed would be so much the more perfect, if he were so far out of the reach of temptation as to want no support from the motives of this world; but we must have a care how we make the being entirely out of the reach of temptation essential to true religion. I know many an honest man that goes to church constantly; says his prayers with great devotion; lives unblamably; and is firmly persuaded that he serves God in the way that he has appointed: and yet I will not venture to say of such a one, that the prospect of a good estate, for instance, would not be able to warp his judgment, or cause him to act even against his persuasion. What then? Shall we condemn him for this reason? Is his religion to be set aside as good for nothing, because under these circumstances he would assuredly transgress? If you say it is; then, by the way, pray take this along with you, that the proposal of temporal motives can do no such hurt to religion as has been pretended. The hurt it does is said to be

this, *viz.* that it is a temptation to men to act against their consciences, which, how far it is an objection, shall be considered in another place. But upon the present supposition it can be no objection. For if he who would sin if a temptation were offered, is void of religion, as well as he who actually does sin when a temptation is offered; it is manifest that the state of religion can, in this respect, receive no manner of alteration, whether worldly motives be proposed or not. But God forbid that we should make him so hard and severe a master. That we must be willing to part with all when he calls us to it, I want not to be told: nor therefore do I doubt but when a man actually sacrifices his conscience to his interest, he is in a damnable state. But if men do well in the station they are in, I do not think that they shall be rejected because under another station they would have done ill; and that for this reason, among many others, *viz.* because it is one instance of the mercy and goodness of that God, who *suffers us not to be tempted above what we are able*, that he accommodates the conditions of men to their respective tempers and capacities, and many times secures his faithful servants from the assaults of those temptations under which he foresees they would be apt to miscarry. It must be allowed then that religion, and a disposition to be overcome by such or such temptations are consistent things; and that the magistrate does but imitate the exam-

ple of God himself, when by a lawful and prudent use of the motives of this world, he removes those stumbling blocks out of the way, which to weak and unstable men may be the occasion of falling.

I thought it needful to say thus much, that I might the more effectually reconcile that influence which I ascribe to worldly motives with the notion of religion. I might add, that as every degree of proficiency is a step to greater improvements; it is to be hoped, and may reasonably be expected, that this imperfect state may by degrees advance and grow up into a more perfect one, by the constant and regular use of those means, of which multitudes perhaps would have been deprived, had they, without any support or encouragement from without, been every one of them left to bear the weight of his own infirmities. If a nurse makes use of leading strings, it is not because she proposes that the child should never go alone, but in order to bring him to it. It is the same thing as to temporal motives with regard to religion. They are seasonable and proper helps in our infant state, in which it is not supposed that we should always continue. No; our business is to *go on from strength to strength*; from lesser degrees of proficiency to greater: and it is our own faults if, under those means which the true religion always affords, we do not arrive to such a state of maturity, that what was at first done under the shelter of the

motives of this world, may be done at last without, or even against the motives of this world.

I have now set the argument in as clear a light as I am able: and if it concludes what it is brought to prove, our adversaries have lost one of their main supports. But if it doth not; surely it is not so very weak and impertinent, but that it might have challenged the consideration of those who have of late written so largely upon this subject. Nevertheless, I do not find that it has been so much as once hinted at. Mr. Locke and Mr. Bayle have indeed both taken notice of it. But with the one (as he has managed the matter) I have nothing to do; and the other has treated the objection with more contempt than became him, unless he had known better how to remove it. What advantages Mr. Locke's adversary may have given him in his particular way of reasoning upon the case I know not, having never seen his books. But this I cannot help observing, even from Mr. Locke's own letters, that great men do not always argue like themselves. The main of what he has said is,* first, that you cannot infer the lawfulness of temporal motives merely from their usefulness; which is true. And if his adversary inferred any such thing, he argued weakly. But the point with me is, whether in order to the begetting true religion, temporal motives are (when applied on

* See second Letter for Toleration, p. 7, *et seq.* and third Letter, chap. 6.

the side of true religion) useful or not useful; and Mr. Locke is so far from denying, that he confesses that they are. Hear him if you please in his own words. *You say that force indirectly and at a distance may do some service. I* GRANT *it: make your best of it. What do you conclude?*— I care not what he concludes, nor what any one else concludes. Thus much is plain, that, if that be true of worldly motives in general, which Mr. Locke grants concerning force (and certainly it is a great deal truer;) to say that worldly motives cannot be useful to the ends of religion, is a refinement upon the question, which HE never once thought of. Second, he quarrels much with his adversary for pretending that Dissenters from the national religion, are punished only *to make them consider*, and says that in fact the case is otherwise. That Dissenters are punished *because they are Dissenters;* and that it would be absurd to punish any man only to make him consider, because all have not opportunity to consider; all have not abilities; some may have considered already; nobody can ascertain what degree of consideration is necessary, nor know when men have considered, or when they have not considered; and for divers others such like reasons. But all this is nothing at all to me. For none of these exceptions have any tendency to shew, (what indeed can never be shewn) that if Dissenters are laid under outward inconveniencies, this will not be a means to make them

consider what they do before they separate; which is the only point that, at present, I am concerned with.

Mr. Bayle falls more directly into the point, and says, * *That the filling men with the fears of temporal punishments, and with the hopes of temporal advantages, is putting them in a very ill state for discerning the true reasons of things, from the false.* But who sees not that this answer, instead of removing, confirms the objection? What Mr. Bayle would have, and what he has taken a great deal of needless pains to prove, is this; that in considering the nature of things, the mind will be apt to determine itself to that side which is attended with temporal advantages. Very good; and is it not then a very just inference from hence, that if temporal advantage attends upon true religion, men will most naturally be led to embrace the true religion? Whether it is right to apply the motives of this world to support true religion, is a question which shall be considered in due time: but if it be wrong, this has no tendency to shew that true religion cannot be supported by the motives of this world; or that the motives of this world, may not be the remote instrument of begetting an inward principle. This is the point which Mr. Bayle ought to have proved: but instead of this, he, in effect, gives it up; by not only allowing, but contending

* Remarks upon St. Austin, Numb. 6. But the reader may see it more at large, Philos. Comm. par. 2, chap. 1.

for that very supposition, upon which my reasoning to prove the contrary entirely depends. As little to the purpose is what he says to that instance by which I have endeavoured to illustrate this matter; to wit, a father's applying temporal motives in the management of his child. *Pergis pugnantia secum, frontibus adversis componere,* says he to St. Austin, who had made use of the same illustration. His meaning is that what is proper in the management of children, is not so in the management of men. But why so? Why thus it follows. * *Children being unable to form any deliberate or reasonable judgment upon their own actions, but obeying the impressions of the machine, and those sensations of pleasure or pain which objects produce in them: what we are principally to require at their hands, is the practice of certain actions. But as they are very little sensible of any motive of honour, and cannot see far enough into the depth of a reason to give it the preference to their passions, they must be threatened, and sometimes whipped, before they can be brought to perform these actions.* Instead of which, Mr. Bayle might have said (for it amounts to no more) that if a boy will not do as he is bidden, he must be chastised. Well; so far I think we are agreed. But what end do you propose by chastising him? Is it merely to regulate the outward act, or to reform the inward disposition also? Why you shall hear. *It answers* (says

* Remarks upon St. Austin, Numb. 27.

he) *our end sufficiently if they only perform these outward actions, though we should not just then enlighten their understandings, nor endue them with any just notions of things.* This is pleasant: not *just then* enlighten! Why how should you *just then* enlighten, when *just then* they are supposed not capable of being enlightened? But is your end sufficiently answered if they should never be enlightened afterward? This cautious way of speaking would give us hopes that the question must be answered in the negative; and then I have the thing I want. But the instance which follows leads us to the affirmative side; for thus he proceeds to illustrate the matter. *A father has a mind his son should learn to write; orders him to write so many hours a day; and whips him if he does not write.* From which he observes, that *the father gains his point if the child only practices writing, and, for fear of whipping, endeavours to write a fair hand.* Impertinent! he that teaches his child to write, to fiddle, or to dance, (for all these instances are alike proper) teaches an art which consists in outward actions: his end, therefore, is sufficiently answered, if, by the fear of the rod, he is brought to perform these outward actions. But suppose a man has a mind to teach his child the catechism; suppose he tells him that he must not lye, nor swear, nor cheat, nor blaspheme, &c. and whips him when he offends. What, in the name of common sense, does he mean by this? Does he treat

him as a mere machine, or as a reasonable creature? Does he propose no more than he proposes by whipping his horse or his dog; *i. e.* only that he may exhibit orderly, certain outward motions; or does he hope hereby to make him a good man? The truth is evidently this: that what the father directly and immediately proposes is no more than the regulating the outward behaviour. It is that his child should be able to repeat his catechism; that he should forbear the acts of lying, swearing, cheating, blaspheming, &c. But then (if he understands himself) he proposes also, that the outward behaviour being thus constantly kept in order, reason may have liberty gradually to operate, and produce those inward good effects of knowledge and virtue, which otherwise (*i. e.* if the passions had been suffered to work as they listed) you might have expected in vain. It was not for nothing then, you see, that Mr. Bayle, overlooking this obvious and pertinent instance, stept aside to fetch in another quite foreign to the matter in hand. For the case being thus determined, the question still returns (which it seems he had no mind to answer) *viz.* Why, if outward restraint may produce an inward principle in children, it may not also effect the same in men; when the reason which makes the means proper in one case, is common to the other? But when Mr. Bayle had told us, that no more is proposed by beating of a child, than regulating the outward action, it

was no wonder that he should say the same of a master's beating his servant; nor that he should make use of as improper an instance to illustrate this latter case, as he had produced to illustrate the former. *Let a cook* (says he) *persuade himself as much as he pleases, that his master is not fit to live, and that he deserves to have his dinner spoiled; yet if the dread of a horse-whip hinders his dressing it ill, is not this all his master aims at?* Yes sir, if he minds nothing else but his belly. But if he be not an *Epicurean* throughout, he will as soon chastise his cook for blaspheming his God, as for spoiling his sauce; and he may mend his manners too, by so doing, for any thing that Mr. Bayle has to say to the contrary. As to what Mr. Bayle has said concerning the efficacy of worldly motives in the hand of God, it is only this, *viz.* that * *God, who is the first mover as well as searcher of hearts, may make his chastisements avail to the inward conversion of the party; but he has no where promised a blessing to our persecutions of hereticks, nor the influences of his grace upon them.* Now, as there is reason enough to believe that he himself thought this to be a mere evasion; so it is (so far as I am at present concerned) so manifestly nothing to the purpose, that I shall not stay to answer it. Nor indeed had I spent so much time in answering his objections against the main argument; if I had not found myself, as it were, bullied into it by a

* Remarks upon St. Austin, Numb. 8.

* *promise* beforehand that it should *so fully be confuted; that for the future it should be made over to the under-spur-leathers, those missionaries of the village who never blush to produce the same objections over and over, without taking the least notice of the answers which have ruined them to all intents and purposes.* This is a good home challenge; and I thought it behoved me not to overlook what Mr. Bayle seemed at least to lay such a mighty stress upon. But the reader, I hope, is by this time satisfied that great words are not always a sign of good arguments.

Parturiunt montes nascitur ridiculus mus.

And now I have done with the argument, so far as it relates to those who are directly and immediately under the influence of worldly motives. Give me leave now a little more fully to enlarge upon the effects which the application of them will have more remotely upon others. Now these effects are not confined to a few, but reach to the whole commonwealth in general; the customs and manners in which are as naturally and regularly determined by such motives, as any effect is determined by its cause. And this is that which makes this consideration, how much soever neglected by our modern writers, to be of the greatest consequence. For the number of those who can propose to themselves places of honour and profit, no where bears any proportion to the whole commu-

* Philos. Com. par. 1, chap. 2.

nity. Admit then that such motives can have no good effect upon the former; it will still be true that the ends of religion will be served by them, if by their means a good provision will be made for the latter. Now to shew you how naturally this effect will follow; let it be supposed only, that the religion which is taught and professed in the church of England is the true religion; let us imagine it to be now first established by law, and so hedged about with temporal privileges, that if a separation from it were not attended with positive penalties, there should at least be no prospect of rising to any thing considerable in the way of civil promotion but under the profession of it: what now will be the natural consequence of this? Why, in the first place, the great and leading men of the nation will all of them be professed members of the church of England; the doctrines of the church of England will be taught in our churches, universities, and public schools; and its way of worship will for the most part prevail. Now to pleasure our adversaries, I am willing that upon this first change, they should suppose as many outside professors as they can have the conscience to suppose. Be it so, that many do profess it with a view to worldly interest; more to comply with custom and fashion; and some few out of principle. Yet I will not suppose truth to be so barren a thing, that it will not grow and daily increase by being duly planted and watered. I should rather

say, in our Saviour's language, that it is *like a grain of mustard-seed, which when it is sown, is indeed the least of all seeds; but when it groweth up, it becometh a great tree, so that the fowls of the air lodge in the branches thereof.* Now if you consider it, here is an effectual provision made both for *planting* and *watering*. For as to *planting*, not to mention the effect which the constant and regular preaching of God's word will probably have even upon these professors themselves; not to mention this, I say, it is plain that those same reasons which prevail upon them to conform to the established religion, will cause them to educate their children in the same way; and our schools and universities will be as plentifully stored with the children and youth of the country, as our posts of honour are filled with those of a more advanced age. It matters not how this happens: for does any one think that because the father, in conforming, proposes only to make himself great, therefore the child is placed out of the reach of every thing that is good? What if somebody, to gratify his avarice or ambition, accepts of a post which he cannot possibly execute consistently with his principles, *i. e.* against his conscience? I hope, for all this, his son may learn his church-catechism with as much sincerity as you can wish. And certainly whatever, in such a case, be the motive which influences the parent, this cannot hinder the good effect of instruction upon his children; nor

will that religion which, in virtue of this instruction, they shall hereafter follow with a good conscience, be at all the worse because the parent, both in following it himself, and in having them taught to follow it, acted with a bad one. I do not say that this effect will always follow: for some perhaps may have so little religion themselves, as to take pains that their children may have as little; and it is possible for a man, after his child hath been well disciplined in the doctrines of the church of England, by some new art or other, to undo every thing that has been done before. But these are cases which rarely happen, and which never can happen but when men find so much pleasure in an evil conscience, as to be willing to leave it as a legacy to their children; or have their eye upon some growing party which they think will be considerable enough to alter the establishment, and model the constitution after their own minds. But generally speaking, I say, the consequence will be as I have represented it. For what general reason can be assigned, why a man should not bring up his child in that way which he chuses to follow himself? Is it not natural to us all to desire the same advantages for our children which we desire for ourselves? Thus then will the seed be sown, which, being gradually watered by the preaching of God's word in the places of his public worship, will grow up into a plentiful harvest both to the present and to future generations.

This effect will be so much the more certain and universal in proportion as the number of those who profess the national religion, upon a principle of conviction, is greater: which though for argument sake it was supposed to be the least; will yet in fact, where truth is encouraged, be always the most considerable, because truth must always be visible to those who have understanding to discern it, where there is no unreasonable bias to obstruct its influence. So that from hence, and from all that has been offered upon this head, I beg leave to infer, that it is possible for the magistrate, by the methods of civil administration, to advance the interest of true religion: a point which I should have been ashamed to have dwelt so long upon, had I not thought it necessary towards the conviction of those who have accustomed themselves so much to refining, as to grow unacquainted with the most plain and obvious things. There had certainly been no need of this arguing *à priori*, if our adversaries would only have given themselves the trouble of opening their eyes, and of observing what every day passes in the world! I should rather have said, if they would have been so just as to have made a proper use of what they do observe. For who so forward as they to complain of the mischief that worldly motives do, when they are made use of to support a false religion? And what I beseech them is the mischief they complain of? Are they afraid that men are made

hypocrites, mere outside professors? This is the case of many without question: but it were a barbarous sort of civility to compliment the good sense of whole nations, or indeed the major part of any nation, at the expence of their honesty. The common people in France, Spain, and many other countries, profess Popery (as we have all the reason in the world to believe) with as much integrity, *i. e.* under as firm a persuasion of its truth, as the common people of England profess Protestantism. How, I pray, happens this? Is it not from hence, that the motives of this world are made use of to support and encourage Popery? Again; Popery heretofore prevailed in England as universally as Protestantism does now. Whence this difference? Is it not hence, that whereas the motives of this world were heretofore employed on the side of Popery, they are now turned against Popery? If not, why are we afraid of Popish kings, Popish laws, a Popish government? Why, I say, do we fear and so cautiously guard against this great evil; if we do not believe, that upon such a change, Protestantism would in a while be rooted out, and Popery be restored to its ancient possessions? Judge now if this be not an evidence to the eye-sight of the world, that temporal motives may be the instrument of begetting an inward principle; and that, whatever the religion be in favour whereof these motives are adequately applied, that religion will most assuredly prevail. And what is

the reason of this? Why, if it needs to be repeated, it is partly, because the motives of this world do bias the judgments and understandings of men; but principally, because the general course of instruction and education in every commonwealth does constantly and unavoidably follow them. There is no one so inconsiderate as not to observe, that the principles which we hold in our manhood, are, generally speaking, either the same with, or an improvement upon, those which we have imbibed in our younger years; that it is a hard thing to lay aside those notions which long use and custom has rendered familiar to us: and that (few men being formed for study and speculation) religion is, in most, not so much the result of their own industry in comparing and judging, as of the happy or unhappy care of those who have had the first framing of their minds, and laid the first rudiments of knowledge. These, I say, are common observations. Now if the effect of worldly motives be such when applied in favour of a false religion, how much more forcibly will they operate when they are made use of to encourage the true; when the power of custom and prepossession shall conspire together with that of natural light, as well to persuade, as to keep men firm and stedfast in their persuasions?

How far the effect of worldly motives, when applied to support a false religion, is an argument against applying them to encourage the true, is a

point which I shall fully consider in another place. My present business was only to shew that it is possible in the nature of the thing, for the magistrate, by the methods of civil administration to serve the interest of true religion; or that the application of worldly motives is not an improper means of begetting true religion. And though I think I have made good this point beyond all reasonable ground of exception; yet I will beg leave just to mention one consideration more, and that is the example of God himself in his dealings with the Jews, whose law was enforced with temporal sanctions. For how irrational soever it may be thought to argue from what was done under the Mosaic law, to what may and ought to be done under the Christian dispensation; the case will certainly go so far as to shew that religion may be promoted by temporal methods, unless any one be so wicked as to believe that God makes use of improper means, or so absurd as to imagine, that the end which God proposed was only to bring his people to the practice of a mere external worship, and not to secure that inward reverence which was due to his person and authority. And indeed unless it be true that religion is, in the nature of it, capable of being promoted by temporal methods, I see not with what sense it is that we pray (as our liturgy teaches us) that the civil magistrate and those who are IN AUTHORITY UNDER HIM, MAY ADMINISTER JUSTICE TO THE MAINTENANCE OF TRUE RELIGION AND VIR-

TUE. But our adversaries have attempted (and what is it that they will not attempt?) to reconcile this prayer to their notions! They * are FULLY SATISFIED (it seems) *that to* MINISTER JUSTICE TO THE PUNISHMENT OF WICKEDNESS AND VICE, AND TO THE MAINTENANCE OF TRUE RELIGION AND VIRTUE, CAN *mean nothing but to execute their office so, as to punish the* OUTWARD ACTS *of wickedness and vice, and to encourage the* OUTWARD ACTS *of righteousness and virtue.——Or if any think——that the* MAINTENANCE OF TRUE RELIGION, *signifies the support, establishment, and defence of any particular profession or order of worship——this goes no farther than* EXTERNAL PROFESSION, *and the* EXTERNAL BEHAVIOUR, *and* SOUNDS *used in public worship.* But whence this mighty satisfaction I wonder, that true religion and virtue CAN signify nothing more than outward acts, outward behaviour, outward sounds? Is religion a mere outward act? Why no; but *it happens here to be called* so. It happens! As if our reformers compiled the liturgy with so much haste that it was pure chance whether they spoke sense or not! But how, I ask, are they assured of this? Why, first, true religion *is here opposed to* wickedness *in practice, as* virtue *is to* vice——*and the* outward actions *of men, as they affect human society, are the object of his* (the magistrate's) *care and concern.* This reasoning is somewhat dark: but either I cannot understand it,

* Answer to the Representation, p. 172, 173.

or it concludes thus. That which the magistrate punisheth, is the outward act of wickedness only; therefore that which we pray that he may maintain, is the outward act of religion only: which conclusion, lying about as far distant from the premises as east is from west, I must leave these reasoners themselves to find out the connection. The reason why the magistrate punisheth only the outward act of wickedness is obvious enough, and shall be considered afterwards. But be it what it will, surely there is sense enough in praying that the magistrate may be diligent in punishing all acts of wickedness on the one hand; and in maintaining (not merely the outward profession of religion, but) true essential religion on the other, if it be in his power to maintain it. O! but this is what the magistrate *cannot do;* and they argue, second, that therefore we are not here taught to pray that he may do it. *The magistrate——can reach with all his power no farther than* outward practice;—He *cannot reach to the hearts or thoughts of men, so as to make them truly worship God, or truly religious; so that this supposes external behaviour to be here called true religion.* But who told them, I would desire to know, that the magistrate with all his power can reach no farther than outward practice; or that he cannot make (*i. e.* that he cannot be the instrument of making) men truly religious? Why nobody; but they *think so,* it is *their* opinion, THEY *have often remarked it.* But under

favour it is not their opinion, nor our opinion, nor any body's opinion, but the opinion of those who compiled the liturgy, that is to be considered in the case. If they can very plainly prove that they have any where taught this doctrine; this indeed will be a good rule whereby to interpret the words of the prayer: but if not, they themselves may remark it as their own opinion as often as they please: the matter will still rest where it is, and the argument end in the same place where it begun. What I say is, that if the magistrate cannot maintain true religion, there is no sense in these words of our liturgy, which teach us to pray that he may do it. Their answer is, that in these words we cannot be taught to pray that the magistrate may maintain true religion, but only that he may maintain the outward profession of true religion. And why? Why because the magistrate cannot maintain true religion. Is not this special reasoning?——But to settle this point in a few words. The compilers of our liturgy have no where delivered it as their opinion, that the magistrate cannot promote true religion: they suppose the direct contrary in this very prayer, which is so far from enforcing, that it will not admit of that sense which our adversaries are willing to put upon it. The word RELIGION is, I own, in common speech, often used to signify no more than the outward profession: but that religion, considered as an outward profession (*i. e.* abstracted from internal purity),

should be a proper subject of a Christian's prayer, is a notion as new as it is absurd. Or if our adversaries do not think themselves singular, in praying for the mere shadow and form of godliness; let them, if they are able, justify themselves from one plain passage at least, either in our public prayers, or in any approved form of private devotion. Besides, if they could wrest the word RELIGION to this sense, this would not help them. For we pray here that the magistrate may maintain not only the true religion, but VIRTUE. And elsewhere, that he may PRESERVE THE PEOPLE COMMITTED TO HIS CHARGE IN WEALTH, PEACE, AND GODLINESS, and that RELIGION AND PIETY MAY BE ESTABLISHED AMONGST US; which words VIRTUE, GODLINESS, and PIETY, do never, even in the mouth of the vulgar, signify the mere outward behaviour. And thus much shall suffice to have been spoken concerning the first question.

CHAP. II.

OF THE MAGISTRATE'S RIGHT TO ENCOURAGE TRUE RELIGION, WHEREIN IS SHEWN, FIRST, HOW THIS RIGHT STANDS BY, AND UNDER, THE LAW OF NATURE.

IT being shewn that it is (in the nature of the thing) possible for the magistrate, by the exercise of civil authority, to promote the interest of God's

true religion, and by what methods; we come now to the main point, which is to enquire what right he has to do it. Which question, as it is in itself evidently distinct from the foregoing; so it bears no such relation to it, as that the one must necessarily be determined by the other. If the magistrate has a right to encourage true religion, this indeed supposes it possible for him to encourage it, as has before been observed: but, on the other hand, when you have proved it possible for the magistrate to encourage true religion; something more is required to shew that it is lawful for him to do it; for you cannot infer a right from a mere possibility.

Two things then, I conceive, will readily be understood when we speak of the magistrate's right to encourage true religion, *viz.* 1. that we speak of the person or persons in whose hands the supreme power in any commonwealth is lodged; and, 2. that we speak of the magistrate considered as such, *i. e.* considered as acting in his public capacity. That the magistrate in his private capacity may encourage true religion, and that he ought to do so, no one disputes: for he is then considered not under the notion of a magistrate, but under the notion of a man; and consequently must have the same right that all other men have. But what a man has a right to do as a private person, he may have no right to do as a public minister: and therefore I have expressly added these

words *by the methods of civil administration*, to denote that the inquiry is concerning what the magistrate has a right to do *ex officio*, or in virtue of his being the head of the body politic. To determine this point, therefore, it will be necessary, in the first place, to take a general view of the magistrate's office; and to consider whether the care of religion does at all belong to it or not. For if it does not; all methods which, as magistrate, he can make use of for the encouragement of religion, will be an abuse of his trust, and consequently alike unlawful. But if it does; those methods which have been assigned above as proper in themselves, may be lawful also, and must be so unless some special reason intervenes. I shall therefore make it my business to shew, that the care of religion does belong to the magistrate's office: but in doing this, the nature of the subject will not admit that I confine myself so strictly to the general point, as not sometimes to mention some of those particulars, in which the care of religion does consist. I shall however be as sparing as I can, reserving the more distinct discussion of those particulars till afterwards.

That we may proceed clearly then, it will be very proper to trace the matter up to the beginning, and shew how the case stands, under, and according to, the law of nature. For certain it is, that what right the magistrate always had by the law of nature, that right and no other he has still under

the Gospel; unless the Gospel hath made any difference; which, whether it hath, or hath not, shall be considered in its proper place. Let us consider then, what true religion under the law of nature is: and this can be neither more nor less than moral virtue, *i. e.* a behaviour towards God and man, suitable to the dictates of right reason, resulting from the belief of a Providence, *i. e.* of a God who made and governs the world; who is the rewarder of them that do well, and the punisher of them that do evil. I mention rewards and punishments, not as if the being influenced by the expectation of them were essential to the notion of natural religion (for this is a question with which there is at present no occasion for me to concern myself,) but I speak of them as the great motives, without which religion cannot in fact be supported, and which the notion of a Deity naturally leads us to expect. It is impossible for us to think of a just and a wise governor of the world, without supposing that he will some way or other vindicate the honour of his laws, and make a proper distinction between those who reverence, and those who set at nought his authority: and accordingly we may observe that even those heathens who had little or no notion of a future state, did yet consider the gods whom they adored under the notion of rewarders and avengers; which gave rise to those numberless superstitions, which constituted the external worship of the Gentile world. But

whatever vanities superstition and a false notion of the Deity might introduce; true religion, under the law of nature, will be nothing else than moral virtue, and of this I would always be understood when I speak of the magistrate's right to encourage true religion under the law of nature.

To know, therefore, whether the care of religion belongs to the magistrate by the law of nature, we must consider the end of the magistrate's office; which all men acknowledge to be the security of the civil interests, *i. e.* the lives, liberties, and possessions of the subject; all which may be comprehended in one word, the PUBLIC CIVIL GOOD. Whether this be the ONLY end of the magistrate's office, shall be considered by and bye; that this is ONE end of it, is confessed on all hands, and, in consequence of this principle, it has been allowed that * *whatever directly affects the happiness of public societies, is within the magistrate's care.* I make no reckoning here of the word *directly*, because our adversaries by sometimes using, and sometimes omitting it, have shewn that they make no account of it themselves; and because in reason it is plain, that if it be the business of the magistrate to take care of the public civil good, he must have to do with every thing in which the public civil good is concerned, whether it affects it directly or indirectly. The question therefore is, whether the public civil good be concerned in the religion of

* Answer to the Representation, p. 160.

the subject: and this it evidently is, upon these two accounts. *viz.* 1. as the public civil good is concerned in the behaviour of the subject, upon which religion, or the want of it, must always have a very sensible influence; and 2. as the public civil good is concerned in the pleasure or displeasure of Almighty God, who blesseth those that pay a due reverence to his name, and frequently punisheth whole nations *for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* As to the first of these two points, it is so clear and evident by its own light, that it hath been observed even by our opposers, from whom it hath extorted this confession, that * *true piety is of high benefit to society, as it engages all men to do those outward actions which are beneficial to society.* Now those who can allow thus much, should, methinks, be led to this easy and natural inference; that therefore it is the magistrate's business, as guardian of the public civil good, to promote and encourage true piety. But, instead of this, it is immediately added, that the civil magistrate *has it not in his office to encourage true piety;* and it is perpetually inculcated upon us that his concern reaches no farther than to the *outward actions* or behaviour of men.

Now though this notion appears at first sight to be as absurd as it is new; yet because it is so much insisted upon, it may not be amiss to search to the bottom of it. As to the meaning of it (which

* Answer to the Representation, p. 232.

must first of all be stated) one would most readily apprehend, that by the *outward action*, is understood the material action, considered as separated from the will or intention of the agent. For though we have been told, that the will or intention enters into the essence or formality of an action, as that which distinguishes it from an event or passion; I must beg leave to say that this is a mere arbitrary assertion, and contrary to the common use of language. That intention enters into the essence of a moral action, I know well enough; and the reason is plain, because without intention there can be no morality. But action there may be, where there is no intention; for otherwise all actions would be moral actions, and philosophers would talk nonsense when they distinguish them into voluntary and involuntary. But not to trouble the reader with such niceties as these; we will take them according to their own explication, and their meaning is, that the outward actions of men considered as distinguished (not from the intention, but) from the inward motive or principle of action, are the only objects of the magistrate's concern.

I say then that this notion is absurd, because it makes it to be no part of the magistrate's concern to cultivate and improve the principles, (I will not say of religion, for this without doubt was the thing intended, but the principles) even of human and social virtue. The writers upon this subject have

been very fond of late of * separating religion from civil government, even so far as to suppose men uncapable of religion, and yet capable of entering into society. The supposition, I presume, they themselves see to be nonsense, because the same reason and understanding which qualifies a man for society, brings him also under the laws of religion. But it is as good in my hands, I hope, as it is in theirs; and therefore, to pleasure them, let us for once suppose all religion banished out of the world, and a government erected merely upon maxims of worldly policy. Now though we have taken care to shut out all religion, here will still be what I call (and I think not improperly) human and social virtue. For man is still supposed to be a reasonable creature, entered into society for the enjoyment of civil privileges; and consequently he must, as such, think himself bound to such a behaviour as will best serve the interests of society. Is it now any part of the magistrate's concern to encourage and promote this inward principle? No, say they, for the magistrate's concern reaches no farther than to the outward behaviour, considered as distinguished from the inward principle. But let them but attend to the force of their own rule, and they will find their mistake. Whatever affects the public civil good, falls within the magistrate's care: if then the principles of social virtue do affect the public civil good; the consequence must

* Answer to the Representation, p. 229.

be that it is the magistrate's business to encourage and promote them. And that they do affect the public civil good is plain from this unanswerable reason; that without them, that behaviour in which the public good consists, can never effectually be secured. That government has always been looked upon to be in an unsound and tottering condition, where the obedience of the subject stands upon fear or private interest, and not upon an honest principle of duty and affection; and I am confident our adversaries are of the same opinion. May we not then from hence venture to infer, that therefore the concern of the magistrate extends to the inward principle, as well as to the outward action? I shall for once take leave to make the experiment, and leave it to their great sagacity to find out, how it comes to pass, that though according to their own confession it is the magistrate's business to secure the public civil good; it should yet be no part of his business to secure the means upon which the public civil good does necessarily depend.

In a word, since, as it is allowed, men as subjects, are to be considered as reasonable creatures entered into society; it must be the concern of the magistrate to provide as much as in him lies, that they perform a reasonable obedience; which an obedience void of the principles of social virtue certainly is not. But how shall the magistrate encourage social virtue? Why if this be all the dif-

ficulty (and I can think of no other) I should hope that it is already removed. The magistrate may encourage social virtue by the same methods by which (as I have shewn) he may encourage religion. For that knowledge of what becomes us as reasonable creatures, and that subduction of appetite and passion, the means whereof are evidently in the magistrate's hand: these, I say, as they are proper to lead men to the *fear* of *God*, so they are proper to lead them to *honour the King*. Hard indeed would it be, if it were impossible for the magistrate by all he can do, to contribute any thing towards effecting that, without which no government can possibly subsist. But (to mention one thing more) is there nothing in a just, wise, and diligent administration? Nothing in a paternal care and tenderness over the subject exemplified by proper acts of beneficence towards those who do well, and of mercy and clemency even to those who do ill? Do these, I say, tend only to influence the outward act? Or rather do not they create an inward principle of loyalty, and beget that mutual confidence which supports society? If not; let no prince hereafter think himself secure by virtue of such methods. For there is, in this respect, plainly no difference between him that sways the sceptre of righteousness, and him that ruleth with a rod of iron.

But to return; the reader is desired to take especial notice, that the tendency of what is now

offered is only to shew, that the magistrate's office is not confined merely to the outward behaviour of his subjects, but that it reaches at least to the principles of social virtue. Let us now try, if you please, whether there be not room enough for religion to stand upon the same footing. And the case, I think, is evident. For if it be the magistrate's concern to cultivate and improve social virtue as that without which society can never be secure; for the same reason it must also be his concern to cultivate and improve the principles of religion, which are a means relative to the same end. As social virtue is the only sure foundation of civil obedience; so religion is the only sure foundation of social virtue: which two things, though they may be distinguished in the idea, do yet in fact generally go together. To be under a just sense of our duty towards God, and to serve him under the prospect of those motives of obedience which he hath propounded; this, I presume, is what deserves the name of true religion. Now he who is thus disposed, must be supposed to be furnished (unless some unhappy error intervenes) with all those virtuous principles by which society is supported and maintained. But take away this, and the virtue which remains, I fear, will be so small as to be hardly worth the reckoning. For there is no principle which will be strong enough to hold the generality of men, when once the bands of religion are untied, and they are

under no manner of awe from any being, but those who are like themselves; whose knowledge they are many times able to deceive, and to whose power they very frequently find themselves superior. This is so true, that those who, upon principles of *philosophy and vain deceit* (as the apostle speaks), have undertaken to dispute religion out of the world, when they have been pressed to give an account, how it has happened that all civilized nations have agreed in the belief of a God, and of a Providence, if there were no foundation for it in that common reason which is given to all, have generally answered that it is a contrivance of State, intended for no other purpose than to preserve the peace and order of societies. I need not, I presume, stay to answer the argument; but the objection itself is an ample confession, that all nations in the world have looked upon religion as a necessary means to support government; and there is nothing which experience does more constantly verify. If then the public civil good cannot, either at all, or so well be secured without religion, what can be more evident than that it is the concern of the civil magistrate, as he is the protector of the public civil good, to take care of religion?

The result then is this; that the magistrate, as he is the guardian of the public civil good, is directly concerned with the outward behaviour of his subjects, and that he is indirectly concerned with religion too, as it is a principle of outward

action, the presence or absence whereof will generally determine the behaviour of the subject, either to the good or hurt of the commonwealth. A proposition so exceeding clear and evident, that one may justly wonder what should lead men to so much extravagancy, as, separating the outward act from the internal motive or principle, to confine the magistrate's care to the former, as distinguished from the latter. Now the main foundation of this mistake (next to that weak pretence, that it is impossible for the magistrate to be instrumental in regulating the inward principle, which has largely been refuted: next to this, I say, that which hath contributed most towards leading these writers into this mistake) is their taking the measure of the magistrate's office from what falls under his cognizance when he dispenses rewards or punishments. * If, say they, *the* ACTIONS *of men without considering the* INTERNAL PRINCIPLE *from which they proceed, are the points which lye before the magistrate,* (*i. e.* when he punisheth offenders) *then neither religion* AS *religion, nor virtue* AS *virtue, are his proper concern, but the outward action* ONLY. That is, in short, because in dispensing punishments the magistrate considers only the outward act, therefore his office reaches no farther than to the outward act. But certainly this is a very wild inference! the reason, and the only reason, why the magistrate in these cases considers only the outward act,

* Answer to the Representation, p. 246.

is because he can judge only of the outward act, *i. e.* he hath generally no certain rule whereby to determine what the true motive or principle is, from whence any action proceeds. But the magistrate's being unable to judge of the inward principle will never prove that his office has no relation to the inward principle; because (as may be shewn by a variety of instances) a man's office concern, or business, may relate to those things which, in the nature of them, are removed from the reach of his cognizance. If these writers pay any regard to reason or Scripture, they must acknowledge that it is the proper concern of every parent, not merely to regulate the outward behaviour of his child; but to make him truly virtuous and religious: and yet it is evident that in rewarding the child when he does well, or in punishing him when he does ill, the parent does exactly what the magistrate does (and he can do no otherwise), *i. e.* he takes cognizance of the outward action only. Again; what is it that the church takes cognizance of in judging its members? Is it not the outward act and that only? But is it right, think you, from thence to conclude, that the church hath no concern with the inward principle? Shall we make the laws which concern religion just such *beauty washes* (I make bold to borrow the Dean of Chichester's comparison) as they have made the laws of the State?——But to proceed: if the reason why the magistrate in these cases

considers not the internal principle, be his inability to judge of it; will you give me leave to say that if he could judge of it, it would be his business to consider it? Whether you will, or will not, the thing is evident. For 1st, as to the case of punishment; let us suppose an offence committed either out of a mistaken zeal for the good of the commonwealth, or upon a principle of religion and conscience; although, for a reason which shall hereafter be mentioned, the magistrate ought not so far to consider the inward principle, as not to punish the offender; yet, supposing him certainly to know it, he ought thus far to consider it, as to shew all the favour and clemency that the case will admit of, and not punish him with the same severity that he would punish another, who, through a wicked contempt of the magistrate's authority, should be guilty of the same or of a like crime. On the other hand, let us suppose no offence at all committed, *i. e.* no law of the state transgressed by any overt act; I will not ask here whether a formed intention to offend ought not in reason to have the same effect; (for this is besides the present argument.) But I will go much farther and ask, whether, supposing a man, without so much as any formed intention to offend against the laws of his country, to be under a settled principle of disloyalty or disaffection to the government; whether, I say, in such a case the magistrate, if he knew it, would not have a right to punish him?

To me it is evident that he would. For such a principle being inconsistent with the public security, there is just the same reason why he should banish such a subject out of his dominions, as there is why he should hang the thief that robs upon the highway. 2dly, this point is yet more evident with respect to rewards, which no magistrate, who has sense, ever dispenseth to the outward act, any otherwise than as such an act is considered as an indication of the inward principle. When a prince bestows a place of honour or profit upon one of his subjects as a reward for services done to the public, what does he mean? Does he consider these services merely as outward acts beneficial to society? Certainly not. For admit that the man be a traitor in his heart, and that he served the public only to serve himself; will the magistrate, supposing him to be well assured of this, even then bestow the reward? If he has sense, I say, he will not. He considers therefore the outward act, as a sign or token of the good disposition, the presumption of which must always be the proper reason why any man is rewarded. What now is the consequence of these observations? Why plainly this: that the magistrate is concerned with the inward principle, as well as with the outward behaviour. For how comes it to pass that he is obliged to consider the inward principle, supposing him to know it, if the inward principle be none of his concern? Is it right, think you, for the magistrate, either in

rewarding or punishing, to be determined by a consideration which hath no relation to the office he bears? I shall be told, perhaps, that the supposing the magistrate to be able to judge of the inward principle alters the case, and makes that to be his concern, which otherwise is not his concern. But this is a jest: for mere knowledge can only direct the exercise of a power where it already is; it cannot create a power where it is not. If the magistrate certainly knew what I dreamt of last night, my condition, I conceive, as a civil subject, would be neither better nor worse; and why? Why because the magistrate has nothing to do with any one's dreams. And if he has as little to do with men's principles as with their dreams, what difference can it make whether he knows them, or whether he knows them not? But the magistrate has thus much to do with men's principles, *viz.* that it is his business, by all possible and lawful methods, to encourage those good ones upon which the public security depends, and therefore to encourage the principles of natural religion, because, as has been shewn, the public security depends upon them. That he cannot judge of the inward disposition, doth in no wise alter the case. It may be a reason, perhaps, why the success of his endeavours will be attended with the greater uncertainty: but it no more proves that religion is none of his concern, than a bishop's or any other clergyman's inability to judge of the inward dispo-

sition, will prove that true Christianity is none of his concern.

Thus far I have considered the public civil good, only as it is capable of being affected by the behaviour of the subject. But, 2. there is another way, as I observed at first, by which the public civil good may be affected, and that is by the hand of God: sending either blessing or cursing upon a nation; either immediately or by the interposition of his creatures, as the instruments of executing his will. That the public civil good is, upon this account, concerned in the religion of the subject, is a point which not only the Scriptures every where bear witness to, but which even the Heathens acknowledged by the light of nature, as appears from several passages cited by Grotius, and by many more which it would, I conceive, be no difficult matter to lay together. Now the proper use that is to be made of this observation is plain and obvious, to wit, that forasmuch as religion, or the want of it, is the means of bringing down God's blessing or his curse upon any nation or people; therefore the magistrate, as he tenders the public good, is concerned to provide that God be honoured and obeyed by all who are within the reach of his authority. We should look upon that prince to be extremely wanting in his duty, who should not use all imaginable caution to prevent his subjects from affronting a potent neighbour, whom he knew to be in a condition to fall upon

him and ruin his dominions. And is it right, think you, to be afraid of an earthly monarch, and not to dread the Sovereign of the World? But this argument hath been so well urged by the Dean of Chichester in his *Considerations*, that I need only stay to consider how well it has been answered. The substance of what has been said comes to this, viz. 1. that * *some* of those passages in Scripture which are usually alleged on this occasion, are *promises and threatnings*, which *respected the* JEWISH *nation* ONLY, *the declared* SANCTIONS *of whose laws were temporal.* Now the thing is true enough, that the Jewish law was enforced by temporal sanctions, to which there can be no doubt but that many of these passages relate. But this helps not the business forward in the least: but still there may be other passages in Scripture which have no peculiar reference to the Jews, and which confirm what (as I observed just now) the light of nature teaches, to wit, that it is the method of God, by the direct interposition of his Providence, to punish any nation which shall shew a contempt of his laws. Are there then any such passages, or are there not? Why here we are treated with much reserve. For we are told in effect, 2. that *all the other* passages, are *declarations of the tendency of good and evil practices; of what is called morality and immorality, to the public safety or ruin of nations, in those methods by which God is resolved in his wise Provi-*

* Answer to the Representation, p. 180.

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dence to govern the world, which is saying no more than what a mere *fatalist* might say. For by *those methods by which God hath resolved in his wise Providence to govern the world,* no more may be meant than the general course and order of things, as at first established by God: and then by the *tendency of good and evil practices,* must be understood the natural effect of good and evil practices, as resulting from that general order. So that we are still at a loss, to know whether it be allowed or disallowed (what is now supposed as warranted from Scripture, to wit), that God doth at any time, by his special Providence, interpose to correct the wickedness of a nation by temporal judgments. But we will suppose (because it is the most charitable supposition) that it is allowed, and see what the rest of the answer will come to. It is said then that these passages *were directed not to magistrates peculiarly, but to all men.* No doubt; and as the people are to make that use of them which is proper to their station; so the magistrate is to make that use of them which is proper to his. What use the people ought to make of them is a point which falls not within the present question: and therefore it signifies nothing to inquire, whether the account here given of it be exactly right. But common sense will teach us this short lesson, that, forasmuch as the sins of a nation are made up of the sins of particular persons, every man should take care to do his duty faithfully, lest he be in-

strumental in bringing down the vengeance of God upon his country. And what is the use that the magistrate ought to make of these declarations? Why it seems they are *arguments to all in authority, to do their utmost to restrain all such outward acts as have that evil tendency*——How! outward acts do you say? Is it enough to appease an angry God to restrain the outward act only? Can the Searcher of Hearts be deceived by an outward appearance? This carries too gross a sound; and therefore it is immediately added——*and to encourage every thing which promotes* TRUE GOODNESS *as far as it lies within their reach.* Here is something in this! For this is the very inference which the Dean has drawn, and which every man of common sense must draw; to wit, that it is the magistrate's concern to encourage true goodness, or (which is all one) true religion; which he doth, who encourages that which promotes true goodness. But what sense is there in acknowledging that the magistrate is concerned to encourage true goodness to the utmost of his power, and declaring it at every turn, that the magistrate with all his power cannot encourage it? To say that the magistrate is bound to encourage true religion, so far as it is in his power to do it, is to suppose that in some degree or other it is in his power to do it, or it is to say nothing. But this is what his Lordship flatly denies; and therefore, at p. 232, he speaks more roundly and undisguisedly, and says, that as

to God's judgments, *the concern of the civil magistrate in this affair is to do his own duty conscientiously*, which is, *to discourage all those* OUTWARD PRACTICES *injurious to society, which are founded upon impiety from whatever root they proceed.* And this it seems is all; for, adds he, *if this be all he* CAN *do towards it, then this is all that can be implied in his office, or expected of him.* Now this for my life I cannot understand. For since the reason why God sends his judgments upon any nation, is now supposed to be its impiety, the argument to the civil magistrate is either none at all, or it is this, that he is to remove impiety, which is not done by removing the outward act only. If indeed the magistrate cannot encourage religion, nor therefore remove impiety; this is a reason sufficient to shew that it is none of his concern, and consequently that he can have no concern in such passages as these: but whether he can or cannot, is a point which I shall now very willingly leave to the reader: and if it appears that he can, the consideration before us is a good argument to prove that he ought to do it by his Lordship's own confession.

It appears then, I hope, by this time, that the care of religion, by and under the law of nature, does belong to the office of the magistrate, considered as he is the guardian of the public civil good. It remains now to be considered whether securing the lives, liberties, and possessions of the subject,

be the only end of the magistrate's appointment; or whether his office hath not a direct, immediate relation to religion, as well as to the civil or worldly interests of men. The writers on the other side, with one consent, maintain that it hath not: but of good reasons to support this assertion there is every where a great scarcity. His Lordship contents himself only with observing, that if * you *take away the necessity and conveniency of men's entering into societies for protection and defence in their civil concerns; you take away all necessity and usefulness of the magistrate's office:* and this he thinks to be an *unanswerable argument*, that *those concerns* are the *only* end to which the office of the magistrate is relative. Now the observation without doubt is true: for the necessity and conveniency of men's entering into society for protection and defence, resulting from the corruption and depravity of mankind, whereby they are disposed to offer violence one to another; to take away this necessity and conveniency, is to take away that depravity, *i. e.* it is to suppose that all men are as they ought to be; upon which foot there would be no need of a magistrate, either for protection or any thing else. But now if I should say, that the same depravity which renders society useful and necessary, with respect to men's civil interests, renders it also useful and necessary with respect to their religious; and that the office of the magis-

* Answer to the Representation, p. 175.

trate was appointed with a view to this latter end, as well as with a view to the former, (which I hope is sense at least;) this *unanswerable argument* (as it is called) would dwindle away into a mere nothing, and leave the matter just in the same condition in which it found it.——But I pursue the question in its natural order; of which, that the meaning may be the better understood, I must observe, that religion, considered as it is under the law of nature, and civil interest, can never in fact be separated the one from the other. All deviations from the eternal law of reason, do directly or indirectly, in a greater measure or in a less, affect the happiness of civil society: upon which account, as I have shewn, it is the magistrate's proper concern to provide (as far as in him lies) that obedience be paid to the dictates of reason. But the point now is, whether this be the ONLY argument to prove that the magistrate is concerned with religion, or whether the care of religion does THEREFORE ONLY belong to the magistrate, BECAUSE religion affects the public civil good. I maintain the negative, and shall endeavour to prove, that the magistrate is concerned with religion upon its own account; insomuch that if you could suppose religion to have no relation to public civil good, the care of religion would still belong to the magistrate's office.

But before I enter upon this, it will be proper to consider, how or by what way the care of religion

may be supposed conveyable to the magistrate: because it hath been insinuated by some modern writers, as if the thing were in its own nature impossible. This seems to have been the case of Mr. Locke, who perpetually supposes that to vest the magistrate with the care of religion, is * to *abandon the care of one's own salvation, and blindly to leave it to the choice of the magistrate to prescribe what faith or worship we shall embrace.* Now this (as he truly observes) is impossible: *for no man can, if he would, conform his faith to the dictates of another: i. e.* it is in no man's power to believe just as another would have him believe; and he might have added, that no man has or can have such a right over himself, as in matters which concern religion and God's worship to lay himself under an obligation, to act according to the dictates of another, in opposition to the dictates of his own mind. † *It*

* 1st Letter concerning Toleration, p. 9.

† Absurdum foret si futurus civis ita imperaturo se obstringeret; submitto voluntatem meam voluntati tuæ etiam in hoc, ut ad arbitrium tuum velim amare, venerari Deum, in Deo confidere; aut plus tibi fidei quàm Deo adhibere; aut de volente ejus amorem, venerationem, obsequium omittere; aut tuo jussu ejusmodi signa adhibere quae naturam Dei destruunt.—Thus the learned Puffendorf, in his Treatise De Habitu Religionis Christianæ ad Vitam Civilem, p. 17, 18. "But it is to be observed "that the Baron does not observe this as a direct proof that the "people cannot stipulate with the magistrate about matters of "religion (as Mr. Locke has done); nor does he indeed any "where teach any such thing. But the design of it was to shew "that men have not the same right to give up their religious li-

would be absurd if a man about to enter into society should stipulate with the person designed as supreme magistrate in this manner; "*I submit my will to* "*yours, even in this, that I will love, worship, and* "*trust in God according to your liking;*" *or thus;* "*I will confide in you, rather than in God;*" *or* "*I will forbear to love, worship, and obey him if* "*you please.*" *Or* "*I will make use of such signs* "*or outward expressions of worship as destroy, or* "*are inconsistent with the nature of God, if you* "*command me.*" This I say is absurd, because it supposes it possible for men to divest themselves of that relation which they bear to God as the supreme lawgiver. But then it is to be considered, that to vest the magistrate with the public care of religion carries along with it no such obligation as is here supposed. For the public care of religion consists (as has been shewn) in providing by law, both that instruction be duly administered, and that it may have its proper effect upon the minds of men: and the methods before specified for the doing of both are of such a sort, as that the giving the magistrate a power to make use of them implies no sort of promise, or stipulation blindly to submit to whatever the magistrate shall think fit to appoint as touching religion. If I consent that the magistrate shall have authority to distribute yearly, out

" berty, as they have to give up their civil; or that they cannot " traffic with their consciences, as they may with their money " and estates: a proposition more than enough evident."

of the public stock, so much money as he shall judge to be necessary and convenient for the maintenance of public teachers, I do not hereby so much as pretend to engage myself not to examine their doctrines, and either to embrace or reject them, as I shall see most reasonable. And if I consent yet farther, that he shall have power to make use of outward restraint, as a bridle to wantonness, I still leave myself at liberty, either to differ from the religion of the magistrate, and submit to the inconveniencies which shall be laid upon me, or to adhere to it and avoid them. In short, to vest the magistrates with the care of religion, is not to abandon the care of our own salvation, but to give up a part of our liberty and property in order to promote the salvation of ourselves and of others; which if any one thinks to be a weak and imprudent thing, I hope in time to convince him of his mistake; but surely no man can say that it is impossible. I shall only add that this objection has very little to do with the controversy, under the view in which we are now considering it: for the supposition, of a diversity of opinions about religion (upon which it rests) must relate chiefly to points of revealed religion; because, concerning the doctrines of natural religion, there is and always has been a general agreement.

It being clear then that a right to take care of religion, is in the nature of it capable of being conveyed to the magistrate, I come to the main

inquiry, *viz.* whether it doth not appear that such a right does in fact belong to him, from considerations which have no relation to the public civil good. For the determining which point, it will be necessary to inquire into the nature and design of commonwealths, it being certain that nothing can be the end of the magistrate's office which may not be considered as an end of men's entering into society. Our adversaries consider a commonwealth as a number of men entered into society merely for temporal or worldly ends, and therefore say that worldly things are the sole object of the magistrate's concern. On the contrary, I consider a commonwealth as a number of men associated not only for worldly ends but for the ends of religion, and thence infer that his care extends itself to religion likewise. This is the difference, for the decision of which, since we are called back to the original institution of commonwealths, thither therefore we will go. I shall only premise, that this inquiry does not lead us to consider what was in fact the end propounded, when men first of all entered into society; for besides that this is impossible to be ascertained, at this distance of time, I do not see that it signifies any thing to the purpose. Mr. Locke tells us that * *there are nations in the West-Indies who have no other end of their society but their mutual defence, against their common enemies: in these* (says he) *their captain* or

* 2d Letter concerning Toleration, p. 54.

prince is sovereign in time of war, but in time of peace, neither he, nor any body else, has any authority over any of the society. Now had this been the nature of the first commonwealth, I see not how this can determine the nature and constitution, of such bodies in after ages: for commonwealths were at first framed for such ends and purposes as were then found to be needful, which probably were not * ALL that longer experience taught to be so. If at first men thought it sufficient to guard themselves only against common enemies, it might be and was afterwards found necessary to secure themselves also against mutual wrongs; and no one doubts but that (notwithstanding any former precedent) a commonwealth may be as justly founded upon both these views as upon one of them only. So that I say, admitting it for truth, that at first there was not the least mixture of religious concerns in the framing of commonwealths; yet if in after ages it was found reasonable and fitting to take in the concerns of religion, the right to do it cannot be questioned, and the magistrate's authority to interpose in the affairs of religion, in commonwealths so constituted, will be plain and indisputable.

The true and only way therefore to come to a decision of this point, will be to consider what ends or purposes, a number of men in a state of

* See Mr. Barbeyrac's Note upon Puffendorf of the Law of Nature, Book 7, chap. 1, § 7.

liberty, would, by a right use of their reason, most naturally propose in framing themselves into a complete and perfect commonwealth. For a commonwealth framed upon those ends must be a commonwealth framed according to the original institution of such bodies, *i. e.* if not according to what commonwealths at first actually were, yet according to what in reason they ought to have been. This is the only proper and pertinent sense I am able to put upon this phrase; so that the question at last amounts to this, whether it be in the nature of the thing reasonable and fitting that the magistrate should be vested with the care of religion or not. The reader, doubtless, has observed that hitherto I have been contented to argue with our adversaries upon their own hypothesis; to wit, that the supreme authority in every commonwealth is originally founded upon the consent or voluntary agreement of the people: and this is the hypothesis upon which I intend to proceed, because it will signify little to confute men upon principles which they do not acknowledge.

Thus much then I am willing to grant to our opposers, *viz.* that, supposing a number of men in a state of liberty, the first and leading motive to induce them to abridge themselves of that liberty, and coalesce into a body politic, would, probably, be the securing themselves from violence and wrong. For the conveniencies and inconveniencies of this present life, being the things which

ordinarily make the quickest and most sensible impressions upon the mind of man; it is natural to suppose, that a concern for these would on such an occasion be uppermost in their thoughts. But then there is one question which I very much want to have clearly resolved; and that is, why this concern for civil advantages must needs shut out all concern for religion; or, why those same men who enter into society for the security of their lives, liberties, and possessions, may not also, in entering into society, have a farther regard to the honour of the Supreme Being. The case you know supposes that the men, who are now framing themselves into a commonwealth, do make a right use of their reason: now where reason is rightly exercised, there must always be a dutiful reverence to God, and a just concern for the honour of his laws; which those who are possessed of it, will take care to preserve, not in themselves only, but in others also, to the uttermost of their power. If then it be apparent to reason, that the benefit of civil government extends itself to religion, as well as to worldly good; why, I pray, MUST a reasonable man, or rather how CAN a reasonable man, be solicitous about the latter, to neglect the former? Or, why will not his reverence to God lead him to provide for the one, as well as his regard to himself leads him to provide for the other? The dependence of religion upon society every one must be supposed to have experienced

in his own family. For families are societies: and as every father or master is the head of a little commonwealth, so every magistrate is but the head of a large family. Tell me then, if you can, why those who think it right as fathers or masters, to make use of their authority to secure (as much as in them lies) the honour of God, should not think it right to vest the magistrate with the same power; or why it is reasonable that religion should be taken care of in private families, and not reasonable that it should be taken care of in the commonwealth?

If these considerations be duly attended to, it will not, I conceive, appear so unexceptionably clear, that commonwealths, according to their original institution, respect the civil interests of men exclusive of the ends of religion. But whether it be, that they thought it a point too plain to need any proof, or too embarrassed to admit of any; so it is, that the writers upon this subject have generally taken it for granted. The learned Puffendorf indeed must stand as an exception, who (in the Treatise before referred to) not only asserts the thing, but gives his reasons for it; which, for the reader's satisfaction, I shall here set down in his own words. * *Since* (says he) *reli-*

* Cum religio et Divinus cultus non minus commodè a paucis quàm a multis hominibus, in exiguo quàm magno cœtu exerceri queat; non opus fuit ob eam causam societates struere, magno ac valido hominum numero constantes. Præsertim cum increbe-

gion and the worship of God may as well be exercised by a few, as by many; as well in a small, as in a large congregation; there was therefore no need upon that account, to frame societies made up of a great and powerful number of men. Especially since those injuries to which mankind was exposed, and which at first induced men to form themselves into commonwealths, had no tendency to turn them aside from the worship of God; but only to deprive them of their lives, their liberties, and their possessions. Nor does it in itself, or in the nature of the thing, at all concern religion and God's worship, that a man lives in society with many; since every single person in this affair stands upon his own bottom; nor is a man therefore religious, because he converses with others that are so. Moreover, those masters of families who lived before there were any commonwealths, were as remarkable for their piety, as any who have lived in commonwealths afterwards. This is all that this deservedly esteemed writer has offered to support a notion whose proofs ought to be as strong as the consequences of it are great. But all this, in

scentes humano in genere injuriæ, quæ mortales primùm ad instituendas societates civiles subegerunt, non huc tenderent ut alios a cultu Dei averterent, sed ut vitâ, libertate, ac bonis ipsos spoliarent. Neque etiam per se, ad pietatem et expromendum Dei cultum facit, in societate multorum hominum vivere, cùm quilibet homo pro se cultum suum Deo adprobare debeat, nec ideò pius quis sit, quia cum aliis piis degit. Et qui ante civitates institutas vixêre patres-familias, non minus pietatis laude celebres sunt, quàm qui pòst in civitatibus vixêre.—Ibid. p. 15.

my humble opinion, is little to the purpose. For though it be true, that the entering into society is not necessary to secure to a man the exercise of his religion, as it is to the enjoyment of his life, liberty, and possessions: though a man's religion is never the better merely for his being in society, nor the worse for his being out of it; and though there may have been as good men before the institution of commonwealths, as there have been since: though, I say, all this (which I conceive is the whole of what this reasoning amounts to) be true; yet it will never follow from hence, that religion may not receive very great advantages from society, and that in framing of a commonwealth it is not reasonable to have a regard to these advantages, as well as to the advantages of this carnal life. You and I may be as religious in a desert as in a city, and serve God as faithfully, whether we are under any restraint from human laws, or whether we are under none; *i. e.* if we are so disposed. But who sees not that the wholesome laws of society operate upon the disposition itself, and lead many to the fear of God, who, if left wholly to themselves, would have trampled his authority under their feet? Still therefore, I say, the reason is wanting why this end should have no place in the framing of a commonwealth; or why those, who arm the magistrate with power to repel all violences offered to themselves, should not also vest him with authority to suppress all insults of-

fered to God, whose honour they ought not to set at a lower rate than their own safety.

But lest any one should think that it was this author's meaning to deny, or that in reason it ought to be denied, that religion can receive any advantage from the methods of civil administration; though this point has been largely spoken to in the foregoing chapter, it may not yet be amiss to pursue it somewhat farther. That the magistrate's making use of the motives of this world, 1. as an encouragement to the industry of teachers, and 2. as a check to the levity and wantonness of the hearers; that this, I say, is a very proper means to promote both the knowledge and the practice of true religion, abundantly appears from the reasons there laid down, which there is no occasion for me here to repeat. What I have now to add, is that this is not only a very proper means, but a very necessary one; so necessary that without it religion cannot in any tolerable measure be maintained in the world. How far this observation holds with respect to revealed religion, shall be considered in its proper place: at present we are concerned with religion as it is under the law of nature, which results from the true knowledge both of God and of ourselves. Now though this knowledge is founded in reason, and must therefore be discoverable by reason; yet since it is the result of reason rightly exercised and carefully improved; this plainly leaves room for all those

errors to creep in, which want of judgment, or want of consideration, exposes us to. How great and how many such errors may be, the Heathen world before the coming of Christ (to say nothing of those notions since, to whom the preaching of the Gospel never came) are a lamentable instance; among whom the most stupid idolatry every where prevailed, and the vilest abominations were practised under the name and colour of religion: the reason of which was not that God had *left himself without witness*; for the works of the creation were a sufficient evidence of his *eternal power and Godhead*, and that natural faculty of discerning between good and evil, which in a greater or in a lesser degree was common to all, would, if well employed, have led men generally to a reasonable service. But the case was, that what through the weakness of some, and what through the carelessness and inconsiderateness of others, (occasioned by pride, sensuality, and worldly-mindedness,) the evidences of truth were stifled and suppressed, and reason, which should have governed the man, became the slave to appetite and passion. Now from these considerations, (which no good writer * hath failed to take notice of upon proper occasions) the necessity of an order of teachers, to explain and inculcate the duties of natural religion, hath rightly been inferred; and we have the testimony of one,

* See in particular Dr. Clark's Evid. of Nat. and Rev. Relig. *Prop.* 5, 6.

whose word, I presume, will weigh more with some than the reasons of a sober writer, that such an office * is *absolutely necessary to the peace and happiness of society; i. e.* (I suppose) to the securing that morality and good behaviour upon which the peace and happiness of society depends. Now if particular instruction be necessary to secure morality, it must be equally so, whether you consider it as relative to the good of society, or whether you consider it abstractedly under the notion of religion only: and pray tell me, how it is possible to engage a sufficient number of men to employ themselves in this useful and necessary work, without making some public provision for their maintenance and encouragement? Undoubtedly as the general corruption we are now speaking of, was owing principally to the great want of teachers, so this want of teachers was owing to the neglect of the Heathen magistrates. In maintaining those superstitious rites which constituted the external part of their worship, they were indeed more than enough diligent: but morality was no where publicly taught but in the schools of the philosophers, who by their eternal wranglings and contentions had sublimed it into a science, suited only to nice and speculative heads; and consequently more proper to sooth the pride and vanity, than to reform the manners of their hearers. Besides, those parts of their doctrine which were plain and instructive,

* Independent Whig, Numb. 4.

were concealed from those who most wanted instruction, I mean the vulgar. For these philosophers subsisting only upon those stipends or salaries which they received from their pupils as the price of their labour; those who had no money, were almost sure to have as little knowledge; the only remedy left being the having recourse to their writings, which very few were able to understand. There were indeed some brave, disinterested spirits, who, upon the mere prospect of doing good, made it their business, by plain and wholesome instruction, to endeavour the reformation of mankind, of which Socrates stands recorded as a notable example: but such instances were exceeding rare; and generally speaking, those who were well enough qualified for such a work, thought it enough to take care of their own affairs, leaving every one his neighbour to shift for himself as well as he was able.

From this cause, I say, it happened that gross ignorance prevailed over the face of the whole earth; which sufficiently shews how necessary the care of the magistrate, in providing for the due and regular administration of instruction, is, even under the law of nature. But there is one thing yet which shews the magistrate's care to be farther necessary, and that is the great aversion in mankind to attend upon the use of those means which are necessary to lead them to the true knowledge of God and of themselves, and the greater still,

to frame their lives and conversations agreeably to what they are taught, and do indeed sufficiently understand. This proneness to evil, philosophers in all ages have observed and lamented, and it is what every one, more or less, experiences in himself; the reason of which being evidently founded in the irregularities of our fleshly appetites, the restraining these by the present application of worldly motives, must therefore be not only a proper, but a necessary help towards leading us to virtue. Mr. Bayle has observed, upon some occasion, that * *mankind are too cold and remiss when they are spurred on by nothing but reason;* which he supposes to be the case (as indeed it is) when they have no other motive in view but the prospect of good or evil to come. Now if this be right, those surely have shewn themselves to be very cold and negligent reasoners, who are for leaving truth to shift for itself, and laying no other restraint upon men, than what their own reason lays them under, as if they could want no other motive. But what do they say for this? Why, that *men would then be free from all discouragements in their inquiries after truth,* and judge of all things *with the greatest impartiality:* and when the truth is by this means found out, they are, by the same bountiful way of reasoning, set free from all farther discouragements, and supposed, upon the mere strength of its evidence, forthwith to pursue what

* Cited by Barbeyrac, in the place above quoted.

they apprehend to be their duty. Now all this, for ought I can tell, might be right, if man were such a creature as our adversaries might wish him to be: but taking him as in fact he is, (which is the fair way) the supposition has no foundation in reason, nor is it at all justified by experience. To lay aside the use of all worldly motives (which is what they plead for) is not to destroy lust and appetite, but to leave them to their full swing. Now if there be any thing plain from experience, this is plain, that where men's passions are left to reign without controul, they commonly degenerate into brutes, or something worse. If the great, and indeed the only thing which discourages men from inquiring after the truth be the prevalency of their fleshly appetites, it is nonsense to pretend that men are under no discouragements where passion has the utmost room to prevail: it is therefore also absurd to imagine that men can want no other motive to lead them to virtue than the evidence of truth, because those same passions which hinder them from inquiring after the truth at first, may as well hinder them from obeying it afterwards. But if any man thinks that there is no sense in what I say, let him ask himself this one plain question: what is it that makes the use of worldly motives necessary to support civil government? Is it not this, that were men left under the influence of pure reason only, they would for the most part, upon the prospect of present pleasure or

profit, act unreasonably? Certainly it is; for if men were disposed to do what they ought to do, there would be no occasion to put the sword into the magistrate's hand. Now if outward restraint be for this reason necessary to the ends of civil government, it must for the same reason be necessary to the ends of religion: and he who, without any regard had to this consideration, shall draw up schemes for the advancement of religion, will but (as we say) make laws for Utopia, and imitate the folly of that builder, who with great labour and expence should rear up a fabrick, without considering the dimensions and properties of the creatures it is intended for.

In short, considering man as he really is, compounded of a soul and body, distracted with passions, and loaded with infirmities, the interests of religion will appear then only secure, when such a method is made use of as has a due regard to both. And so far am I from believing, that if worldly motives were wholly laid aside, and truth and virtue were attended with no greater present advantages than error and wickedness; so far, I say, am I from believing that those blessed effects would follow, which some men are so apt to fancy to themselves, that I must either lay aside that little reason, and forget that small experience of the world, which I have, or look for the direct contrary. Divine truths, instead of being considered with the greatest impartiality, would ordinarily, I

am afraid, be but little thought of. Instead of serving God *in spirit and in truth*, men would generally grow into a careless neglect of him and his worship: and instead of being sincere in religion, would, if they chose any at all, chuse, not that which reason after their most diligent inquiries should lead them to, (for such industry would rarely be found) but that which should be most agreeable to their own capricious humours, and superstitious opinions, or best served their particular worldly views. This argument has a peculiar force, with respect to religion under the view in which we are now considering it, *i. e.* as discoverable by the light of nature; which though indeed it gives a very strong evidence of the rewards and punishments of a life to come, yet this evidence is not so well adapted to common understandings, nor does it come up to the fulness of that which revelation affords us. But supposing natural and revealed religion to be equal in this respect, the argument will yet maintain its ground: for the motives of a life to come being at too great a distance to affect the passions, must still come under the notion of a rational motive, and can operate upon us only as such.

Now then let us stop awhile, and once more ask the question, why, since the care of the magistrate is not only useful, but even necessary, to the support and maintenance of true religion, this end should have no place in the consideration of those

who are about to frame themselves into a body politic. Surely in making ourselves the subjects of men, we do not cease to be the subjects of God: his will therefore should be our rule, to which the nature and reason of things seem in this case to be as plain a direction as can be given. Will you suffer me to leave the whole matter with you in a few words? If it be the will of God that we should serve and obey him, the means which he proposeth for this end, must be adapted to the circumstances under which he hath created us. Now you say, that God hath proposed to lead us to the obedience of himself purely by the strength of rational motives; and I say, that if God had made us not men, but angels, he could have done no otherwise. I do not think that God ought to have laid, or indeed that consistently he could have laid such a restraint upon man's will, as that his wickedness should not be able to frustrate the measures of his Providence: but I say that originally, and in general, the end and the means must bear a due proportion the one to the other, and therefore that it is not consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, to give us passions, and yet to deal with us as if we had none. Nor hath he thus dealt with us in other cases. We are born under the restraints of human authority; and the paternal care reaches to religion, as well as to the outward decency of behaviour. Wherein lies the fitness of this procedure? Why in this, that

we are born weak and passionate creatures: and do we cease to be such when we become men? I should be glad to find it; but if not, why must we presently be let loose from ALL human authority, when the foundation of it (though in a lesser degree) continues to be the same? Again; let us consider how God hath dealt with us as to the affairs of this lower world. His design in creating us (I take it for granted) was to make us happy both here and hereafter. The foundation of our future happiness is our obedience to HIM, considered as his subjects; and the foundation of our present happiness is the observance of those rules which are proper to us as creatures, dependent one upon another. Now pray what is the method which God hath made use of to lead us to this latter sort of happiness? Hath he left us merely under the influence of rational motives? No; he knew that he had given us passions as well as reason. He knew the power of those passions, and foresaw that had he left the government of them merely to reason, the world would soon have been in an uproar; and men would have worried and torn each other like so many bears or tygers. He hath therefore brought us under the laws of the civil magistrate, whom he hath vested with the power of dispensing rewards and punishments; that by the application of present motives those might be brought to reason, who would otherwise act in opposition to reason. But is God, think you,

more careful of our temporal happiness, than of our eternal? Hath he considered our weakness and depravity in the one case, and paid no regard to it in the other? Hath he in the smallest matters dealt with us according to what we are, and in the greatest of all hath he dealt with us according to what we are not? I must alter my notion of God 'ere I can believe it.

This, reader, is what I have to offer, to shew that religion is directly the concern of the civil magistrate: of how great weight it is I must leave to your discretion. For my own part I declare I see not any thing that can be alleged against it, except it be this, that by this method there is great danger, lest the care of religion should fall into ill hands, who, instead of applying the motives of this world on the side of truth, shall make use of them to subvert and destroy the truth. Now this being our adversaries' grand and capital objection, and the only difficulty indeed that attends upon the subject, I shall therefore be sure not to overlook it. But because it doth not relate purely to natural religion, but also, and that most principally, to the doctrines of revelation; I think it will be more proper to defer the consideration of it till afterwards.

CHAP. III.

OF THE MAGISTRATE'S RIGHT TO ENCOURAGE TRUE RELIGION; WHEREIN IS SHEWN, SECONDLY, HOW THIS RIGHT STANDS UNDER THE GOSPEL REVELATION.

It being clear then that the magistrate has a right to encourage true religion, by and under the law of nature; our next business must be to consider how the case stands under the light of revelation. In pursuing which point, I do not purpose to begin with the Old Testament; for that under the law the magistrate was by divine appointment vested with the care of religion is allowed on all hands, and therefore there needs to be no dispute about it. But then they tell us that this was a thing peculiar to the legal dispensation, which being entirely distinct from the evangelical, there can therefore be no arguing from the one to the other. Now this I confess, that the magistrate's having a right under the law to take care of religion, is of itself no direct proof that such a right is also vested in the Christian magistrate: but then I think also that it is of great weight, considered as a collateral evidence; and how far the argument will go, I shall not forget to take notice at a more proper season. At present I go to the Gospel, and the point is, whether, as the magistrate under the law of nature has a right to encourage religion,

as taught by the law of nature; so the magistrate under the Gospel, *i. e.* the Christian magistrate, has not also a right to encourage religion as taught by the Gospel.

It has afore been observed, and I presume it will readily be allowed, that what right the magistrate always had by the law of nature; the same right and no other he has still under the Gospel, unless the Gospel hath made any difference. The question therefore is, whether, so far as a general right to encourage true religion is concerned, the Gospel hath made any difference or not; and I beg leave to say it hath made none. For if there be any difference, that difference must arise from hence, *viz.* either, 1. that the Gospel hath by some positive command prohibited the Christian magistrate to concern himself with its religion; or, 2. that, in the nature of the thing, there is not the same reason why the Christian magistrate should concern himself with the religion of the Gospel; as there is that the magistrate not Christian should concern himself with the religion of nature. If I say there be any difference between these two cases, it must necessarily stand upon one or the other of these foundations: for what stronger argument can you desire to shew, that the Christian magistrate has a right to encourage Christianity, than this, *viz.* that the reason of the thing enforceth it, and that the Gospel forbids it not? Now that the Gospel no where forbids the

Christian magistrate to encourage Christianity, must be evident to any one who has ever read the Gospel; and whether it is reasonable for him to do it, will easily appear by looking back to the arguments that have been alleged in the foregoing chapter, and considering whether what they infer with respect to natural religion, they do not infer with regard to revelation also.

In examining this point you may remember, that I argued first of all from the end of the magistrate's office, considered as he is the guardian of the public civil good. And under this head I observed, that if it be the business of the magistrate to secure the happiness of civil societies; it must be his business to secure the practice of true religion, upon which the happiness of society necessarily depends; and that 1. as the happiness of society has a necessary dependance upon the behaviour of the subject, upon which religion, or the want of it, must always have a very sensible influence; and, 2. as the happiness of society is concerned in the pleasure or displeasure of Almighty God, who blesseth those who pay a due reverence to his name, and frequently punisheth whole nations *for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* Now as to the first of these two reasons, it must be acknowledged, that directly and immediately it relates to the principles of natural religion only; because the performance of natural duties, *i. e.* the duties of morality, implies all that good

behaviour which is necessary to the being, or well-being of a civil society considered as such. It is not essential to the being of civil government that the members of it are Christians; nor does a man's faith, with respect to revealed truths, render him a better subject any otherwise than as it leads him to better manners, *i. e.* as it makes him a more moral man. But true morality may subsist in those who have no faith; and if it does, the habitude which they bear to civil society (so far as this reason carries us) will be the very same.

It is nevertheless proper to observe, that though moral virtue may subsist even in those who have no faith, yet that morality is best secured by the religion of the Gospel, the precepts and motives of which are by all acknowledged to be both an improvement and an enforcement of the law of nature: and by consequence that the magistrate is still concerned to take care of Christianity, if not for its own sake, yet for the sake and on the account of morality. And this I would have understood not only of Christianity in general and at large; but of its particular branches. For the whole subsists by its parts; and whatever weakens or destroys one article of faith, has a manifest tendency to weaken and destroy all the rest. It must farther be observed, that there is no one part of the Christian doctrine which does not one way or another, in a greater degree or in a less, contribute towards the advancement of virtue and piety,

For either it is subservient to some greater point, upon which the certainty of our religion does more immediately depend: either it directly points out to us our duty, or administers some help to make the performance of it more easy to us, or furnishes us with some wise and weighty considerations, why we ought to be diligent and industrious in our heavenly calling. If there is room for any exception in this case, it should seem to lie against the positive institutions of the Gospel. But we must not fasten so great a reproach upon the author and finisher of our faith, as to suppose that these external rites are useless, insignificant ceremonies. We should rather consider them (for such indeed they are) as proper helps to the infirmities of flesh and blood, and as instruments ordained by God to secure that inward essential holiness, which is the end of our profession. There is no need for me to enlarge upon these points, because they contain no more than what every Christian, I presume, will readily acknowledge, and what any man of common sense may easily understand. I shall only remark that what is true of the original and standing laws of the Gospel, of which Christ himself is the immediate author; is proportionably true of those by-laws (if I may so call them) relating to order and discipline, which are at any time appointed by persons acting by authority under him; the true use whereof undoubtedly is, the securing the profession of a right faith, and the practice of

an acceptable obedience. So that upon the whole I cannot perceive, but that, in virtue of this first reason, Christianity, in the full latitude wherein that word may be understood, falls under the magistrate's care, though in a more remote indirect way.

But then, 2. as to the other of these two reasons, this (without any sort of difference or distinction) holds in its full force, as well with respect to revealed as natural religion. For that which God is here supposed to punish a nation for, is the wickedness of the people; and men may be wicked against a revealed and positive, as well as against a natural and moral law. I do not say that every one who disbelieves any Gospel doctrine, or who doth not comply with every Gospel institution is a wicked man; because there is such a thing as a pitiable ignorance or innocent mistake. But surely all those who either carelessly neglect or wilfully contemn the Gospel, or any part of it, are wicked men: and such wickedness, no less than direct violations of natural duties, calls for the vengeance of God, who expects to be heard in whatever he commands, and will not in any case suffer his authority to be vilified and set at nought. The Christian magistrate therefore, as he tenders the public civil good, is at least so far concerned to take care of Christianity, as to provide (as much as in him lies) that no man lightly departs from it. But, above all things, he should take care by all

proper methods to rescue it from the insults of the profane and licentious; which impiety, if he dares not suppress, shews his authority to be in a very low and desperate condition; or if he will not, it argues a degree of degeneracy in him not to be forgiven. This right, or rather duty, is farther enforced by this consideration, *viz.* that the same depravity of mind, which leads men to this wickedness, has a natural tendency to lead them to other enormities, which have a more direct influence upon civil society. He who contemns the laws of revealed religion, is in a fit disposition to break in upon the laws of natural religion; for the same authority which supports the one, supports the other. And in all cases it will be found true, that unless the magistrate takes care to secure the authority of God, he will never be able to secure his own.

By what criterion we may oft times distinguish a wilful contempt of the Gospel doctrines from involuntary ignorance, shall be considered afterwards. At present I am only stating the point in general; and therefore think it sufficient just to mention many things, which will be very properly enlarged upon, when we come to examine into the particulars of the magistrate's authority. In general then I think it plain, from the reason now insisted upon, that the Christian magistrate has to do with Christianity, considered as he is the guardian of the public civil good. But forasmuch (as

has been shewn) the public civil good is not the sole end of the magistrate's office, which has also a *direct immediate* regard to religion; let us see what farther help this consideration will afford us. To me then the argument is clear and unexceptionable, that if the magistrate has a right to take care of natural religion, merely because it is religion (which is what this way of reasoning supposes), it will follow, that he is concerned to take care of any positive law or institution, when in virtue of the divine authority enjoining or commanding it, it comes to be religion. This I say must be the consequence, upon supposition that it be needful, that such divine positive laws or institutions be supported and encouraged by human authority. Now the reasons by which I have endeavoured to shew, that it is needful for the magistrate to take care of religion under the law of nature, are, 1st, that otherwise there would be a great want of able and sufficient teachers to instruct men in the knowledge of their duties; and 2dly, a want also of proper and suitable motives to engage them both to attend upon instruction, and to act according to what they understand. Let us proceed then in the method in which we have begun, and see whether these reasons will not as well hold under the Christian revelation. And,

1. As to the argument drawn from the necessity and want of teachers, this concludes more strongly with respect to Christianity; in proportion as the

doctrines of morality (which are only the dictates of natural reason) are more easily learned than the doctrines of revelation; or in proportion as it is more difficult to discharge the office of a Christian teacher, than of a mere Heathen philosopher. The office of a Gospel minister (as it now is and has been for many ages backward) is to defend Christianity against the attacks of atheists and infidels; to explain the doctrines of the Gospel; to vindicate its true and genuine sense against those false interpretations, which have been introduced either by design or ignorance; and by serious and frequent admonitions to enforce and inculcate its precepts upon the minds of men. So that this appears at first sight to be a work full of labour and difficulty; a work which requires a good understanding, great discretion and diligence; a work which we must be prepared for at first by a liberal and learned education, and which must be carried on under a course of life exempted, as much as may be, from the cares and incumbrances of worldly business. Now let any one sit down and consider with himself, whether the bare prospect of doing good would, generally speaking, (or indeed in any tolerable measure), be a sufficient inducement for men, at great expence and trouble, to qualify themselves for an employment, which debars them of all other methods of making even a decent provision for themselves. For my own part, I see little reason to expect it. For though

it is mean and wicked for a man to propose nothing by his entering upon the work of the ministry, but the getting of a livelihood (which is to turn religion into a trade); yet I hope the getting a livelihood by and under an honest and faithful discharge of this office, is no unreasonable expectation; especially since, as the apostle tells us, *God hath ordained that they who preach the Gospel should also live of the Gospel.* When a parent sends his son from school to the university with an intention to bring him up for holy orders, what does he propose? Why, if he has any conscience, he proposes to make him an instrument in the hand of God for advancing his honour. But if he has any sense, he does not lay out that money, which would have qualified him for the exercise of some honest calling, under a view, that having once furnished himself with a sufficient stock of learning and knowledge, he may (as a trial of his virtue) be afterwards sent abroad to starve for his pains. The work of instruction, therefore, can never effectually be carried on, unless a competent provision be made for the maintenance and encouragement of public teachers. And how shall this be secured? Why, by the interposition of the civil magistrate, or not at all. True indeed it is, that the Gospel itself hath thus far provided for the maintenance of its teachers; as to have made it the duty of those, *who receive from them spiritual things, to minister unto them carnal things.* But

this is only a general law; and our adversaries, I presume, are none of those who think that there is any law of God now in force, which determines the exact proportion that every congregation shall allow to its pastor. I am rather apt to fancy that so zealous defenders of civil right and property, will be as tender of men's purses, as they pretend to be of their consciences; and as they have granted them full licence to believe what they please, will also give them leave to pay what they please: upon which foot the teacher's allowance will be either sufficient or not sufficient, just as his hearers are liberally or not liberally disposed, or according as they like or dislike his doctrines; which many times, by how much the better they are, by so much the worse they will be received. Besides, if there were any divine law which determined the exact proportion of every teacher's allowance, this would make, I fear, but small alteration in the case, unless the church had a power to enforce this law by temporal penalties. For what if the people should refuse to do what the Gospel commands? Must the minister be left to feed upon the air without remedy, till he can preach them into a sense of their duty? Why yes; for the church is supposed to have no power to inflict temporal penalties, and it is certain that she has none. So that if the magistrate, in virtue of his office, inflicts none neither, it will be a law without a penalty, and be used as such laws are

always used, *i. e.* observed or not observed, according to discretion.

And where would be the harm, perhaps you will say, if ministers were left to depend for their maintenance upon the discretion of their hearers? Was not this in fact the case for the first 300 years? Yes; and the first preachers of the Gospel, we know, *laboured with their hands;* but has this ever been thought a fit example for after ages to follow? The point is not what was once sufficient, upon a particular extraordinary occasion; but what is and will be necessary, ordinarily and in the general course of the world. The first believers *had all things in common,* for we read, that *as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of them, and laid them at the apostles feet:* which is just as good an argument against civil property among Christians, as the other is against a standing and settled maintenance for pastors. But this continued but for a little time, and whilst the number of Christians was comparatively but small: yet still there remained a great spirit of zeal and devotion, both in the teachers and in the hearers; by which it came to pass, that the one were less desirous to receive, whilst at the same time, the other were more ready to give. But in proportion as the heat of men's zeal began to abate (which in all religions is always greatest at its first springing up), there were larger demands on the one hand, and less supplies on the

other: which was the reason that when Christianity became the religion of the empire, and the multitude of believers incomparably greater, the first Christian emperors found it immediately necessary to supply the defect of voluntary oblations by legal provisions. In short, whatever was then wanting to the church of external supports, was abundantly made up by the internal gifts and graces of God's spirit, as I shall have occasion to observe more fully by and by. In the mean while, I think I may trust the point in general with any man of common observation: let him only cast his eyes about him and consider, how mankind is now for the most part disposed. That which he will take notice of, I conceive, is this; that if any thing considerable is advanced in the way of voluntary contribution, it is amongst those whom faction hath spirited up against an establishment; or, in Popish countries, where people are gulled out of their money by the pious frauds of priests, indulgences, relics, pilgrimages, stories of purgatory, and I know not what. But how stands the case among Protestants in this respect, and particularly among ourselves? Has their having received the true faith enlarged their bowels towards those through whose ministry they have received it? Are they so much the more liberal, by how much they are the more sound? Or rather, have they not almost lost their zeal along with their superstition? How some may have found it I cannot say;

but, I believe, except it be here and there in rich and populous places, few feel the benefit of any thing more than what the law allows them; and even this is very frequently not to be obtained without much difficulty. This shews how hopeful a condition the clergy would be in, if they had no better security to rely upon than the mere courtesy of their parishioners: and doubtless it was from this knowledge of mankind, that all Christian magistrates in the world, have thought it requisite to take them under their protection; and to ascertain that by law, which without law they would have been obliged to have asked, and, what is worse, might have asked in vain.

It is easy then to see what would be the consequence if this method were laid aside; to wit, that, instead of a sufficient number of able and learned men to vindicate, explain, and inculcate God's word; there would in process of time be a great scarcity of teachers; and that these few would generally be of the meaner and more ignorant sort: men, whose circumstances and want of education would afford them no better prospect than the scanty allowance of a congregation. And as the age grew more degenerate, the evil would increase; so that, in proportion as the church would want a better supply of this sort, it would in fact be supplied much worse: the consequence of which in time must be an universal ignorance and depravity of manners. We may write and

preach to the end of our days, but men will still be men: and so long as they are so, it will always be found true, that where there is no encouragement given to learning, ignorance will follow; and that a poor benefice and a mean pastor commonly go together. I have been informed that the bishops in Wales, out of mere necessity, are obliged to confer holy orders upon many, who, besides their sobriety, have little else to recommend them than a good knowledge of their mother tongue. Now were the cause universal, the effect would be so too: and what a notable bulwark against Popery the Church of England would be, I leave every serious person to consider.

But what is all this to us, say our adversaries, who do not * *argue against the maintenance and support of those who officiate in the churches or assemblies of Christians?* With all my heart: truth is so rare a thing amongst them, that I shall always be glad to accept of it wheresoever I find it, even upon their own terms. And therefore if they will speak out and tell us plainly, not only that the preachers of Christianity have a right to be maintained, but also that the Christian magistrate hath a right to ascertain that maintenance; I am very free to discharge them of the consequence. But then they will excuse me, I hope, if from this point thus allowed I endeavour to shew them the falsehood of their principles. If the magistrate

* Letter to Dr. Snape, p. 44.

has a right to support the preachers of Christianity, he must have a right to support Christianity itself: for a right to the means, always implies a right to the end. But if what they say on the other side be true, that the magistrate hath nothing to do with religion; it is certain that he can have nothing to do with the Christian religion: the consequence of which is, that his appointing a maintenance for a Christian teacher in every parish, is as great a breach of his trust, as would be his settling a stipend for the maintenance of a music or a dancing-master. This is so clear a case, that one would think it were next to impossible that any one should mistake it: and therefore I cannot help vehemently suspecting, that by this *not arguing against the maintenance and support of those who officiate in the churches or assemblies of Christians*, a great deal less is intended than what his Lordship perhaps would be willing enough to have understood. By the *churches* or *assemblies* of Christians may be meant *churches* or *conventicles*, *i. e.* the assemblies of all those who go under the general denomination of Christians, whether they preach the Gospel or their own inventions. And it is not said of any particular sort of teachers, that the magistrate has a right to appoint them a maintenance; but of all in general that they *should be* maintained, which (for ought appears) leaves them all alike to the courtesy of their respective congregations. Indeed I can see no great reason why HE should be at all

solicitous about a maintenance for teachers, who thinks * *learning* to be so needless and useless a thing towards leading men to a right judgment in points of religion; as that, *one honest illiterate man* shall be able to do as much as *all the learned men of a* nation *met together in a general council.* If this, I say, be right, the teachers of Christianity have little to do; and the magistrate may much better employ the public stock, than by appointing them a subsistence. Let the cobler go forth from his hovel, and the butcher from his stall, and exercise their gifts before any congregation that will be willing to admit of them. As they like, so let them pay, and the less the better: for I am truly of opinion that the very least they can give will be too good a reward for such qualifications. But to proceed,

2. To the other argument, which is drawn from the want of seasonable and proper motives to engage men to attend upon instruction, and to act according to what they understand; which holds also with respect to Christianity though in a lower degree. The Gospel, as I said before, gives us a more firm assurance of the rewards of a life to come, than the law of nature doth: it also furnishes us with more and greater internal helps, than the law of nature can. But in plain terms, hath it not left us still men, *i.e.* subject to those carnal lusts and appetites, which war against reason, and are

* Answer to the Representation, p. 98.

apt to lead us to a behaviour unworthy of ourselves? If it has, human methods are still necessary; nor should we be so unmindful of our own weakness, as to neglect the use of worldly motives on the one hand; so long as there are worldly motives to encounter on the other. Nor is this any diminution of the excellency of the Gospel; how forward soever some may have been to represent it as such. For religion is not therefore the less excellent, because the corruption and depravity of mankind is greater. Christianity has enough in it to recommend it to the choice of all reasonable men; even though all the powers of the earth should rise up against it: for the rewards which it proposeth in a life to come, being infinitely preferable to all the advantages we can reap in this; it must therefore be a thing infinitely more reasonable to renounce the latter for the sake of the former, than the former for the sake of the latter. But yet if in this degenerate state of the world, mankind are disposed to act unreasonably, and the prevalency of their fleshly appetites shall at any time take them off from being duly affected with the disproportion that there is between earthly things and heavenly; evident it is that these motives must then lose their effect: for that which influences men's actions is not the real intrinsic value of things, but the place which they have in the esteem and opinion of those who apply themselves to judge of, and consider them. It is there-

fore, I say, no diminution to Christianity, that the motives of this world are necessary to give weight to its precepts. For this necessity arises not from hence, that its own motives are not of themselves sufficient if they be rated according to their true value: but the case is, that mankind, through their great proneness to sensual things, being apt to undervalue them, it is therefore needful to make use of other motives, which, though infinitely less in themselves, are yet more adapted to their present corrupted state and condition.

But here again I expect to be told of the *flourishing estate* of the Christian church during the first 300 years; not only without, but in opposition to those worldly motives, the needfulness of which is now insisted upon: nor am I in the least afraid of the objection, which, let our adversaries make the most of they are able, will yield them nothing. For what do they mean by the *flourishing* estate of Christianity? Flourishing indeed it was, if you consider only the purity of the faith then professed, and the piety and constancy of its professors. But he that shall say that had the rulers of this world immediately bowed down their necks to the son of God, and the motives of this world been added to the motives of another; that is, that if all those impediments had from the very first been removed, which alone hindered the progress of the Gospel, the number of good Christians would not have been incomparably greater, and so Christianity

have in this sense (which is the sense to be regarded in this question) flourished more within that period of time than it did; he I say who shall pretend to this, deserves rather to be pitied than refuted. But it pleased God, for wise reasons of Providence, that his church should be founded in sufferings, and the faith of his Son arise out of small beginnings. Small I say, for very small was the number of good Christians, though not comparatively to the body of professors, yet comparatively to the number of those to whom the preaching of the Gospel came. And it ought to be remarked that even to the gathering together this small number, even to this flourishing state of the church, many circumstances concurred which are not common to these latter ages. The miracles which were wrought by the power, and in the name of Jesus, were either before their eyes, or within the memory of those who had been eye-witnesses of them. At least the fame of them had passed through so few hands, that there was no room for those cavils, which in cases of this sort, length of time naturally makes way for: and there was moreover a most plentiful communication of the divine spirit, through which, with more than a human power, the faith of Christ triumphed over the world and all its temptations. In a word; there are visible marks of an extraordinary interposition of the Almighty hand of God to support his infant church: and though I doubt not but the same

power would again interpose in the same manner, if there should be the same occasion; yet since there is no such occasion (*kings* being now become our *nursing fathers and queens our nursing mothers;*) as we have no reason to think that God does now vouchsafe the same assistance; so it is little better than tempting him, to quarrel at those methods of his Providence, by which, in an ordinary way, he is pleased to minister to our infirmities. Besides; if this objection proves any thing, it is, that Christianity flourishes best under persecution; for this was the case for the greater part of the first 300 years. May we not then as well argue from hence, that in order to advance Christianity it were a good way to bring in persecution? But of the falsehood of this, Mahometism has afforded us a sad and lamentable instance, which, by the power of the sword, hath even extinguished Christianity in those parts where once it shone in its brightest glory. And if the same method had every where been used, the same effect (without the miraculous interposition of Providence) would every where have followed. So vain a thing is it for men to argue from particular extraordinary cases what is proper in the general course of the world!

Thus I have gone through those several reasons, by which it has been shewn, that the care of religion belongs to the civil magistrate under the law of nature; and you see plainly that, in a greater or lesser degree, they all of them hold with respect

to Christianity. Now to all that has been offered upon this subject, it will serve (as I said before) as a good collateral evidence to consider, in what manner God was heretofore pleased to deal with his people the Jews. It is a very strong presumption concerning religion in general, that it is the proper object of the magistrate's care, that in the only commonwealth which was of God's own immediate appointment, the care of religion was committed to the magistrate: and the law of Moses being a divine revelation, as well as the law of Jesus Christ; this shews that religion is not therefore an improper object of the magistrate's concern because it is revealed. But if any should say that there is something peculiar in each revelation, which makes the interposition of the magistrate fitting as to the one, but not so as to the other: it will be proper that they tell us also what that is: and the most that I have ever heard of the matter amounts to this, *viz.* that the law of Moses was a law not only of religion only, but of civil government also, and that the security of the Jewish nation, considered as a body politic, was made to depend entirely upon the observance of it; which is true. But the observation I think advances nothing. For this is the very question that I would ask, *viz.* how it came to pass that, under the Jewish dispensation, the law of religion and civil government should be both one; and that under the Gospel, religion and civil govern-

ment should have nothing to do the one with the other. The end both of the law and of the Gospel was ultimately the same, to wit, the leading men to the worship of the true God. As a motive to this the one proposes a temporal, the other an eternal inheritance. Now, from this diversity of the motive under each dispensation, this difference indeed must necessarily arise; that there is no farther need of the promise of an earthly Canaan, the heavenly Being so fully and so clearly revealed. But pray let us consider this one point: was the proposing the land of Canaan, as the reward of their obedience, the only method which God made use of to keep the Jews stedfast in their duty? It is granted it was not. For he brought them under the constant restraint of the civil magistrate, and by this means so linked their obedience even with their present good, that there could be no such thing as departing from the one, without forfeiting the other. And what was the reason of this procedure? Why plainly this, because they were always prone to rebel. The promise was at a distance, and so proper to influence them considered only as reasonable creatures. Lust and passion in the mean while were importunate, and a present disease called for a present remedy. And is then this new dispensation, a dispensation of less wisdom and mercy than the old? Hath God set before us a heavenly Canaan suited only to the nature of angels, and at a much greater distance from us

than the land of promise was from the Jews; and hath he made no provision for our present needs, considered as we are flesh and blood? The Gospel indeed as it hath also brought in a better hope, so it hath also brought in a better nature: but, as I said before, it leaves us still men, and it is plain that we want to be dealt with as such. Let us not then think so unworthily of the All-wise Governor of the World, as to suppose that in a matter of so much consequence as that of our everlasting interest, he makes use of means disproportionate to the end; nor impute that weakness to him which we should blame in an earthly parent, who, in order to make the child whom he loves dutiful and obedient, should think it enough to give him the promise of an estate in reversion, leaving him all the while exposed to the follies and extravagancies of youth, and taking no care to guard him against those temptations, which, by leading him into evil courses, will cause him to fall short of his inheritance.

But if this be the case, you will ask, how happens it that the Gospel has no where given any express directions to Christian magistrates, to make use of their authority towards the support of its precepts? To which I answer, in general, that there was no occasion for it. The Gospel has introduced nothing new in this particular; and therefore there was no necessity of any new injunctions to be added to the old. It is true the Gospel

is in many cases no less express and particular in enforcing old laws than in prescribing new: for of this sort are all the laws of morality, the rules or directions concerning which do nevertheless make up one very considerable part of the Sacred Writings. So that if you should still think fit to urge, why amongst all these directions there are none to the magistrate, to employ his authority in the defence of Christianity; it may not be altogether improper to observe, that the right of the magistrate to take care of religion, was a point generally well understood; and that the design of the Gospel was not to give a complete system of morality (which was not wanting); but to enliven those parts of the universal law of nature, the traces of which were almost worn out; and to enforce those duties, in the practice whereof mankind were observed to be most defective. It is upon this account that the duties of sobriety and purity are every where very earnestly insisted upon, whilst others are only just touched accidentally as it were, and upon occasion. For here it was that lust and passion had made the greatest havock both among Jews and Gentiles: here also the strongest fence was necessary with respect to the Christians of those times, and of the ages to come: the pleasures of intemperance and sensuality, being those which men are carried to with the quickest appetite, from which good men are preserved always with some difficulty, and bad men recalled with infinitely

more. But in the exercise of power and dominion there is something which gratifies the passions; and though there is room enough for neglect in magistrates, they have certainly a great deal less need to be put in mind of their duty in those points in which their authority is concerned, than in others, where the obligation is common both to their subjects and to themselves.

This, I humbly conceive, is no useless observation: but the principal reason why magistrates are no where in the Gospel expressly and particularly enjoined to concern themselves with religion, seems to be this, that when the Gospel was first promulgated there were no Christian magistrates; nor were there, in the order of Providence, to be any such for some hundreds of years after. To have exhorted the Jewish or the Heathen magistrates to encourage Christianity, when as yet they were not Christians themselves, had been absurd: to have exhorted them to encourage their own religion in opposition to Christianity had been yet more so. What room was there then for the giving of a law, when there were none in being by which that law could be put in execution? But the law, you will say, might have been made *de futuro; i. e.* the Gospel might have expressly and particularly enjoined, that when the magistrates of any nation should become Christians, they should make use of their authority to support and encourage Christianity. It might so without doubt; but there are

two reasons to be given why it was not to be expected: the one is that it was not at all natural, and the other that upon some accounts neither was it proper. As to the first, be pleased to consider the nature of those writings, which make up the sacred volume of the New Testament; part whereof are historical, and contain the most remarkable passages of the life and conversation of Christ and his apostles; and part monitory, consisting of epistles occasionally written to particular churches or particular persons. Now what wonder is it that in the whole narrative of the Four Evangelists and of the Acts of the Apostles, we meet with no directions given to magistrates, when neither Christ nor his apostles had any conversation with such? The short period of our blessed Saviour's ministry was employed not among the great and mighty men of this world, who he knew were in no condition to receive his doctrine; but among the poor and the humble, to whom it would have been to little purpose to have discoursed concerning the right and authority of princes. The case was the same as to the apostles: they were subjects themselves, and had to do only with those of the same rank and quality; who therefore were to be instructed not how to rule, but how to obey. Rather there was more need to tell them how to become good Christians than good subjects; for in this latter point the first converts were not wont to be defective. And hence doubtless it is that the

duty even of subjects is in the New Testament so sparingly insisted upon, and that the office of the magistrate is but once or twice * pointed at, and that occasionally, as it contained the reason and foundation of the other. The first, I say, comparatively or with respect to other matters in which Christians were more prone to offend, was little wanting; and the last (in the way of direct precept) would have been unnatural. For to whom should these directions about the magistrate's office have been given? Not to the people whom they did not concern: not to the magistrate himself who as yet was no Christian, nor ever like to be so. Give me leave now to make good what I observed also before, that the giving laws *de futuro* concerning what the magistrate should do, in case he became a Christian, would have been improper as well as unnatural. For it was intended by Providence (for wise and good reasons without question) that the infant church of Christ should be under the discouragement of the civil magistrate, and suffer persecution. This is what our Saviour was very careful to inculcate upon the minds of his followers. He told them that they must *be brought before kings and rulers for his name's sake;* and seems industriously to have avoided saying any thing, which might lead them to expect any good fruit from being his disciples, but what was reserved for them in his own, *i. e.* in the heavenly kingdom,

* Rom. 13. 1 Pet. 2. 13.

that they might not be unprepared for those trials whereunto he had appointed them. To have told them, therefore, that the magistrate should hereafter become Christian, and encourage his doctrines by the exercise of civil authority; what else would it have been, but to have raised in them those hopes, which (as it now appears) he had no mind they should entertain? And where could be the propriety of giving rules to them concerning the state of a case, which was not to happen in their days, nor in the days of many generations to come? Had it been the business of Christ and his apostles to have given an exact and particular account of the state of the church in future times; we might then have expected to have found as plain directions in what sort Christian magistrates were to behave themselves. But of this there is every where a profound silence: and so far was our Lord from encouraging any inquiries of this sort, that when his disciples after his resurrection (still leaning to the hopes of worldly prosperity and grandeur) asked him, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* He checked their forwardness with this rebuke, *it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.* Acts, i. 6, 7.

To conclude all; the writings of the New Testament were never intended to be a complete and exact system either of religion or civil polity.

They are books adapted to a particular time and particular occasions; and it sufficiently answers the end of their composure, if they furnish us with general rules proper to direct the faith, and regulate the behaviour of Christians. And if a general rule will satisfy in this case; permit me to say, that the apostles, St. Paul and St. Peter, (if you are willing to hear them) have given us a very plain one in the places just now referred to; where we are told by the former, that the magistrate *is the minister of God for good* on the one hand, and *a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil* on the other: and by the latter (exactly to the same sense) that he is appointed *for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise* (*i. e.* the reward) *of them that do well.* I know well enough our adversaries will reply, that the good and evil here spoken of must be understood not in a religious but in a civil sense. But this is purely arbitrary. The text, it is plain, makes no such distinction; and as to the reason of the thing, it lies (as I hope I have sufficiently shewn) full against it. But how hard soever it may be to resolve how it came to pass, that the Scriptures should have given no particular direction to Christian magistrates to take care of Christianity, supposing it to be the will of God that they should take care of it; one thing I am sure there is much harder, which it concerns not us, but those who oppose us seriously to consider; and that is, how it happened, (supposing

what they say to be true, that Christian magistrates have nothing to do with Christianity), that they were not expressly forbidden to concern themselves with it. This I say is a much harder question to be resolved than the other. For, in our way of reckoning, the Gospel has introduced nothing new as to this particular; and therefore, as we said before, there was no need of any new injunctions. But, in their way, the office of the magistrate now under the Gospel, differs from what it was at least apprehended to be under the law of nature; and from what it most certainly was under the law of Moses. There never was yet any government in the world, so far as the records of past ages will carry us, in which the care of religion was not esteemed to be a principal branch of the magistrate's office. Now this notion was either right or it was wrong. If you say it was right; you say what we say, who thence conclude that it is so still, because the Gospel has made no difference. If you say it was wrong; the mistake was certainly of too great consequence not to have been taken notice of when the Gospel was promulged; especially considering that God himself had given the greatest countenance possible to this mistake (as it is now supposed to be) by committing the care of the Jewish religion to the Jewish magistrate. Is there any thing then in the writings of the New Testament which tends to shew us, that the magistrate has nothing to do with religion? Not a syl-

lable; though it is obvious to take notice, that the apostles (to say nothing of our Saviour himself), if they had believed any such thing, had the properest occasions in the world to have said so. When, according to their master's prediction, they were *brought before rulers and kings for the sake* of his Gospel, it had been impertinent to have told them (which yet our adversaries seem to think, if our principles be true, they ought to have told them) that they acknowledged their authority, and expected they should make use of it not against, but for Christianity, when they themselves should become Christians. But if what they say be true, and the apostles had denied their authority, nothing could have been so proper as to have pleaded *coram non judice;* which yet we do not find that they ever did. No; the authority was always submitted to; and the defence put upon the righteousness of the cause; and the necessity they were under of *obeying God rather than man.* Look but to the latter end of the Acts of the Apostles, and you will find an instance home to the purpose. At chap. 23, we read of St. Paul's being brought before Felix the Roman governor. His indictment as laid by Tertullus (chap. 24, verses 5, 6.) was this, that he was a *pestilent fellow; a mover of sedition among the Jews; a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes,* and a *profaner of the temple.* The crimes objected, you see, were partly of a civil and partly of a religious nature: and how does the

apostle defend himself? Why, the charge of *sedition* he utterly denies, and puts it upon his adversaries to prove, (verses 12, 13, 18, 19, 20). The charge of his being a Christian, and preaching the doctrine of the *Resurrection*, he confesses, and shews the reasons of his being so. (Verses 14, 15, 21.) His conduct before Festus, the successor of Felix (an account of which we have in the two following chapters), was exactly the same. Here the Jews are urgent on the one hand in renewing their accusations and demanding judgment, (chap. 25, verses 2, 3, 7, 15.) St. Paul on the other hand asserts his own innocency, declaring that *neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar* he *had offended any thing at all* (verse 8). That is, he was a transgressor neither against the laws of religion, nor yet against the laws of the State; for this is to the very same sense of what he speaks, chap. 24, verse 16. *Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.* Finally, when it was moved to him by the governor, whether he would *go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged before* him *of these matters;* not being willing (as indeed he had little reason) to trust himself to the mercy of the Jews, he rejects the proposal and *appeals unto Cæsar*, verses 9, 10, 11.

What follows in the next chapter is a relation of another hearing, which St. Paul had before Festus

in conjunction with Agrippa; where the apostle, having in the first place suggested the true cause of his prosecution to be (as indeed it was) his *preaching Jesus and the Resurrection*, proceeds at large to vindicate his proceeding, by giving them the history of his miraculous conversion: So that the whole being thus laid together, let any reasonable man consider with himself, whether this be any thing like the behaviour of one who disallowed of the magistrate's authority in matters of religion? A Court of Judicature is not a proper place for making converts: and though it may very well be admitted as one reason, why God permitted these holy men to be haled before the judgment seat of unbelievers, that they might have an opportunity of bearing testimony to his Son Jesus; yet it must appear to any attentive reader from the whole scope of the apostle's defence, that what he directly and immediately proposed by it, was the justifying himself against his accusers; by shewing, with respect to some points, that he was not guilty of the facts laid to his charge; and with respect to others, that what he did was nothing more than what ought to be done. But why, I pray, so careful to justify himself, unless because he knew that his judges had a *right* to require a reason of his behaviour? Surely, had he thought otherwise, it had been natural for him to have taken the shorter and more obvious method, and instead of using many arguments and appealing at last to

Cæsar's judgment seat; to have told them plainly, that forasmuch as his accusers were unable to make good that part of the charge which related to sedition, he had reason to hope the case would be determined in his favour; because as to that other part of it which concerned religion, neither they nor Cæsar had any thing to do with it. Or if he thought it a just tribute to his master's honour to *give a reason of the hope that was in him*; yet it can hardly be supposed that he should wholly have omitted that other no less warrantable plea. For why, I beseech you, was it not to be insisted upon? Not because in general it was not necessary: for magistrates were to be told of their duties as well as private persons: and if they took too much upon them in taking cognizance of religious matters, the mistake (as I said before) was of too much consequence to mankind to be suffered to pass without any censure. But under the present circumstances perhaps it was not so prudent. Why not? Could you wish for a more proper occasion? The plea it is likely might have been somewhat dangerous: but what? Could he be afraid of danger who had so lately been strengthened by a heavenly vision: *be of good chear, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also* of me *at Rome?* * And once before by another upon a like occasion, *be not afraid but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee,*

* Chap. 23, verse 11.

and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee? * Can you suspect him of want of courage who, in this very contest, when the High Priest commanded him to be *smitten contrary to the law*, gave so evident a proof of his intrepidity in that brisk reply, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall?* † Or finally, if all this can be supposed; is it yet to be imagined that he should not upon any occasion, nor to any person, let drop the smallest token of his dislike to so foul an abuse of the magistrate's authority? The plain truth is, that St. Paul was an utter stranger to this new-fangled doctrine, of which his own express words are yet a farther, and, in my judgment, an incontestable evidence. *I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat* ὅ με δεῖ κρίνεσθαι, *where I* OUGHT *to be judged.* What can be said to this? Why, I think, I see the utmost; which is, that these words relate to that part of the case only, which was of a civil nature. But why will you thus arbitrarily impose a limitation upon the apostle's words, which the context will not justify, nor indeed fairly admit of? His plea is this, *neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I offended any thing, i. e.* (as has before been noted) I have transgressed neither the laws of religion, nor the laws of the State. Upon this Festus moves; *wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things?* Of what things? Why of all those things which

* Chap. 18, verses 9, 10. † Chap. 23, verse 3.

were the subject matter of his accusation. Now these are the things concerning which the apostle says in his reply, that he *ought to be judged at Cæsar's judgment seat;* which therefore amounts to a very plain confession, that matters, both of a civil and a religious nature, are the proper subject of the magistrate's cognizance.

What has been observed concerning the behaviour of the apostles, is also true of the primitive martyrs, as it were easy to shew by an induction of particulars, did I think it needful. But the thing is notorious: and what are all the ancient apologies? Are they exceptions against the jurisdiction of the Court; or appeals to the common sense and reason of mankind, for the justice and righteousness of the Christian cause? Much do we hear on all hands of the iniquity, partiality, and cruelty of the Roman powers; but not a single word that insinuates, that in taking the affairs of religion under their cognizance, they meddled with matters which did not concern them. But how just soever the cause of Christianity was in itself, it certainly contradicted the laws then in being. Tertullian * owns the charge; and how

* Cum durè definitis dicendo, non licet esse vos, et hoc sine ullo retractatu humaniore præscribitis, vim profitémini, et iniquam exercetis dominationem, si ideò negatis licere quià vultis, non quià debuit non licere. Quod si quià non debet, ideò non vultis licere, sine dubio id non debet licere, quod malè fit, et utique hoc ipso præjudicatur licere quod benè fit. Si bonum

does he go about to remove it? By telling them that they had nothing to do to make laws about religion? No; he answers (as a wise man ought to answer) that their laws were bad and ought to be mended. *When* (says he) *you rigidly insist upon this, that* Christianity *is against* law, *and prescribe against dispensing one jot with the letter upon any consideration of equity, this is declaring yourselves arbitrary; and you play the tyrant if you will a thing to be unlawful, because you will, and not because it is so. But if your will is regulated by the measures of good and evil, and you forbid a thing because it ought to be forbidden; then certainly by this rule of right reason you cannot licence evil, nor forbid the obligations of doing good. If your law prohibits what is good, such a prohibition I conclude to be invalid: but if it forbids what is evil, I dispute not my obedience. Nor think it strange if your laws are sometimes in the wrong, since they are but the composures of men, and not the commands of God.* One passage indeed there is in this *apology*, which our adversaries perhaps will be apt to catch at as favourable to their opinion; and which therefore ought to be taken notice of.[e] It is to be met with in chap. 24, where, speaking to the Roman ma-

[e] invenero esse, quod lex tua prohibuit, nonne ex illo præjudicio prohibere me non potest, quod, si malum esset, jure prohiberet? Si lex tua erravit, puto ab homine concepta est, neque enim de Cœlo ruit. *Apol.* cap. 4.

gistrate, he saith, * *See to it whether this does not concur to the making up of another article of irreligion against you; namely, the taking away liberty in religion, and interdicting men the option of their Deity, so that they must not worship the God they would, but are forced to worship the God they would not. Forced service is of no esteem even in the eyes of men, and therefore even the Egyptians are tolerated in their vain superstition. They are permitted to make Gods of birds and beasts, and to make it capital to kill any of this sort of Deities. Every province and city also has its proper Gods.*——WE *alone are denied the privilege of having a religion peculiar to ourselves: we offend the Romans and are not to be looked upon as Romans, because we do not worship the God of the Romans.* Thus the apologist, whose words if I suppose them to import, that it is a wicked thing in the magistrate (in matters purely of a religious nature) to punish a man for acting agreeable to his own opinion and liking,

* Videte ne et hoc ad irreligiositatis elogium concurrat, adimere libertatem religionis, et interdicere optionem Divinitatis, ut non liceat mihi colere quem velim sed cogar colere quem nolim. Nemo se ab invito coli vellet, ne homo quidem; atque adeò et Ægyptiis permissa est tam vanæ superstitionis potestas avibus et bestiis consecrandis et capite damnandis qui aliquem hujusmodi Deum occiderit. Unicuique etiam provinciæ et civitati suus Deus est.——Nos soli arcemur a religionis proprietate. Lædimus Romanos, nec Romani habemur, quià non Romanorum Deum colimus. *Apol.* cap. 24.

I shall be thought, I presume, to have allowed to my adversaries all that they can desire. Now 1st, give me leave to observe that, even this being admitted, the passage comes far short of the general point, that the magistrate has nothing to do with religion. For it may consistently be said that the magistrate has to do with religion, and yet that he hath no right to punish a man for following his own opinion in matters of religion; because, as has been shewn, there are divers ways, besides that of punishing offenders, by which the interest of religion may be promoted; and consequently divers ways besides this, by the pursuit of which the magistrate may concern himself with religion. The magistrate has to do with religion, if he hath a right by any means to promote and encourage it; and this right is not denied by saying that he hath no right to punish, unless this were the only means by which religion may be encouraged. But, 2. if we will be so just as to allow Tertullian to be his own best interpreter, this cannot possibly be his meaning: for hear what he says a little before in this very apology: * *We have laid aside the worship of your Gods, from the time that we knew*

* Deos vestros colere desinimus, ex quo illos non esse cognoscimus. Hoc igitur exigere debetis uti probemus non esse illos Deos, et idcircò non colendos; quià tunc demùm coli debuissent si Dii fuissent. Tunc et Christiani puniendi, si quos non colerent, quià putarent non esse, constaret illos Deos esse. *Apol.* cap. 10.

them to be no Gods. That therefore which you may demand of us is, that we prove them not to be Gods, and therefore not to be worshipped: for if they are indeed Gods, divine honour is certainly their due; and the Christians will DESERVE PUNISHMENT, *if it appears that they have refused to worship those who are Gods under a notion that they are not Gods.* See you not here how the Apologist joins issue upon the merits of the cause, and declares that the Heathen magistrates had a right to demand of the Christians to prove their Gods to be no Gods, which if they were not able to do, their conduct would then deserve correction? An arrant absurdity surely, if it be true that the magistrate has nothing to do with religion! But what then, you will ask, becomes of the argument, that the Christians ought not to be *forced* to worship the Heathen Deities, because a forced worship is no worship? Why the passages, I think, may easily be reconciled, by saying, that mere punishment does not imply force, or at least not that force which the Apologist complains of. The force which Tertullian condemns as destructive of the liberty of religion, is the dragging men by the head and ears, and compelling them by cruel tortures, either to sacrifice, or to pay some other external mark of divine honour to the Heathen Deities against their wills. This we know was the way; and that the Apologist had this in his view, is plain from chap. 28, where he repeats the same argument, and

refers back to the very passage under consideration. * *It seems manifestly wrong*, says he, *to force men to* SACRIFICE *against the natural freedom of their wills, since, as I have elsewhere declared, religion must be the effect of a willing mind. It must needs be very foolish to press men to the service of the Gods, whom for their own sakes they ought to serve freely.* A foolish and wicked thing it is without doubt, whether the worship men are compelled to be right, or whether it be wrong. But since this is not essential to the notion of punishment, the Apologist, whilst he condemned the one, might (where the goodness of the cause would justify it) very consistently plead for the other. It may be said farther, that by the phrase *Deos vestros colere desinimus*, Tertullian meant something more than the words do properly and literally express; *i. e.* not merely a ceasing or forbearing to worship the Roman Gods, but the teaching every where that they were abominations, and that it was impious and wicked to honour them as Gods. This was the case of the first preachers of the Gospel; and for this it was that they were so roughly treated by the civil powers. Not to worship the Roman Gods was a thing in which the Christians were not sin-

* Facilè iniquum videtur liberos homines invitos urgeri ad sacrificandum; nam et alias divinæ rei faciundæ libens animus indicitur. Certè ineptum existimaretur, si quis ab alio cogeretur ad honorem Deorum, quos ultrò sui causa placere deberet. *Apol.* cap. 28.

gular: for as Tertullian here observes, every country under the Roman jurisdiction had its peculiar Deities, in the worship of which they were suffered without any molestation, because they molested none in the worship of theirs. But the Christian preachers were to root idolatry out of the world, which the Heathen magistrates could by no means endure; nor ought they (may our Apologist very consistently be supposed to say) to have endured it, if, under the notion of destroying idolatry, they had opposed the worship of real Deities. For whether it be truth or not, it is sense at least, to maintain, that every one ought to have the liberty of chusing what God he has a mind to, without being forced into a worship he does not approve; yea, and (if you will have it so) without any sort of obstruction from the magistrate; and yet to affirm that those are deservedly punished, who under a false persuasion are not content to be in error themselves, unless also they be allowed openly to decry and vilify the Gods of their country.

The use that I intend to make of this, is only to confirm what has been before laid down, to wit, that neither Christ nor his apostles ever taught their followers to believe that the civil magistrate has nothing to do to concern himself with religion: for had they taught any such doctrine, the primitive Christians, as they could not have been ignorant of it, so neither could they have avoided

taking notice of it upon such occasions as these: at least they could not so grossly have dissembled, nor have been so weakly unjust to themselves and their own cause, as to declare in favour of the contrary opinion. But that no such doctrine should have been taught, if it were a true doctrine; that the civil powers should be suffered to go on in an inveterate error, of so much consequence to the order of society, and to the state of religion throughout the world, without the least reprehension from those who were sent by Providence to be the reformers of mankind; (especially considering, as I before observed, that God had, as it were, given countenance to the mistake, in that only commonwealth which was of his own appointment;) this I say is a thing so incredible, that with me, it will always stand as a foundation strong enough to bear even the whole weight of the cause. But as to our adversaries, all I shall demand of them is, that they would admit the silence of the Scripture, (upon which, for want of better argument, they would seem sometimes to lay a mighty stress) to be as strong an objection at least against their opinion, as it is against ours. If so, the cause will thus far hang *in æquilibrio;* and whether the other considerations which I have here offered, thrown into our scale, are not of moment sufficient to turn the balance, is what I now submit to the judgment of the world. I know not that I have any where imposed a fallacy upon the

reader: and that it may the more readily appear, either that I have not, or, if I have, where it lies; I think it proper to subjoin the following Analysis, which contains the whole weight of this, and of the foregoing chapter.

The Analysis of an Argument proving the Magistrate's general Right to support and encourage true Religion by Human Laws.

DEFINITIONS.

1. By the true religion, I mean any true way of worship, whether it be discoverable by the mere light of nature, or whether it be of divine, positive institution.

2. By the magistrate I understand the person or persons, in whom the supreme legislative power in any commonwealth is lodged.

3. By his right to encourage, &c. I mean his right considered as magistrate, or considered as acting in his public capacity.

POSTULATUM.

That true religion in the nature of the thing is capable of being supported and encouraged by the methods of civil administration.

SECT. I.

Of the Magistrate's Right to support and encourage true Religion by and under the Law of Nature.

PROPOSITIONS.

1. The concern of the magistrate ought to bear an exact and adequate proportion to the end of his office.

2. It is on all hands acknowledged that one end of the magistrate's office is the securing of the public civil good.

3. Therefore whatever affects the public civil good falls under the magistrate's care.

4. True religion (which under the law of nature is nothing else than moral virtue) does certainly affect the public civil good, 1. as the public civil good is concerned in the behaviour of the subject, upon which religion, or the want of religion, must always have a very sensible influence; and, 2. as the public civil good is concerned in the pleasure or displeasure of Almighty God, who (as the Heathens themselves understood, and the Scriptures do plainly declare) blesseth those who pay a due reverence to his name, and frequently punisheth whole nations *for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.*

5. Upon both these accounts then, it is evident that the magistrate's care reaches to natural religion, and not (as some have pretended) to the bare external actions of men, exclusive of the religion

of such actions. For bare external actions can neither procure the blessings of Providence, nor avert or remove his judgments. Nor can that outward regularity of behaviour, which is necessary to the welfare of all public societies, be effectually secured, without securing that inward virtue or morality which ought to be the foundation of such outward behaviour.

It appears by the foregoing propositions that the magistrate is concerned to take care of natural religion indirectly, or in virtue of his being concerned to take care of the public civil good. It may be proper now to consider whether the magistrate be concerned to take care of natural religion, any otherwise than as he is concerned to take care of the public civil good. It is my opinion that he is otherwise concerned; insomuch that if it were possible to separate natural religion from the public civil good, it would still be his duty to take care of natural religion. For,

6. As the concern of the magistrate ought to bear an exact and adequate proportion to the end of his office; so the end of the magistrate's office is to be measured by the end of commonwealths: which (whatever has been pretended of late) I cannot believe, in their original institution, to relate merely to public civil good exclusive of religion. What was in fact the end propounded when men first of all entered into society, it is

neither possible for us to know, nor at all material to the present question. Because, supposing men in a state of natural liberty, and intending to give up that liberty or any part of it, into the hands of any particular person or persons, for their common good, (which is the scheme of government upon which I proceed;) supposing this, I say, by the same right that one set or number of men in one place propose one end, another set or number of men in another place may propose other ends: and that will be the most perfect commonwealth, by which all those good and warrantable ends are proposed, which may be answered or provided for, by living in society. Wherefore,

7. Since the present controversy relates not to any particular commonwealth, but to commonwealths in general and at large; when it is asked, what is the end of a commonwealth? the meaning of that question must be, what is the end, or what are the ends which a number of wise and reasonable men in a state of natural liberty, may and ought to propose by quitting that liberty, and coalescing into a body politic? And whatever those ends be, which it is, in the nature of things, proper and fitting that such a number of men should propose; those must be esteemed to be the ends of commonwealths according to their original institution. The ends I say; not according to what in fact have been (for in this respect there may have been great diversity in different times,

and different places;) but according to what in reason ought to be, and what in fact always must be, where a commonwealth subsists in its utmost perfection. Wherefore,

8. Although the securing themselves from mutual injuries, and the promoting each others temporal good, is doubtless one of those ends which a number of wise and reasonable men in a state of liberty, may and ought to propose by entering into society; yet this is not the only end. For wise and reasonable men cannot be supposed to be less concerned for the honour of God (whose creatures they are) and their future happiness, than for their present temporal advantages. God's honour is his true worship: by this our future and main interest is secured. Wherefore since (as the question supposes) true religion is in the nature of it capable of being supported and encouraged by the laws of society, as well as the public civil good; the consequence must be, that the supporting and encouraging true religion, is also one of those ends, which a number of wise and reasonable men in a state of natural liberty, may and ought to propose by entering into society.

9. To evince the truth of this assertion yet farther, let us consider the great need there is, that even natural religion should be supported and encouraged by human laws. The law of natural religion is indeed no other, than the law of natural reason. But then it is the law of reason rightly

exercised and carefully improved, which leaves room for all those errors to creep in, which may be the effect of want of judgment, or want of consideration: and how many and how great these may be, the condition of the world, before the preaching of the Gospel, is a sad and lamentable instance. Furthermore; natural religion is the practice of those duties to which the light of nature directs us, from which all men are too prone to be led aside by their vices and their passions. To obviate these evils, what effectual remedy can be found, but from the care of the magistrate in providing both that instruction be constantly and regularly administered to the people, and that proper and seasonable restraints be laid upon evil doers? The want of which things was the true reason why so much ignorance, superstition, and wickedness, prevailed in the Heathen world. Every master finds the usefulness and necessity of these methods in his own family; and reason and experience shews them to be as necessary in the commonwealth. Wise and reasonable men therefore (*i. e.* men who are under a just concern for God and religion) cannot, in framing themselves into a body politic, neglect the consideration of these things, but must have a due regard to them; not only with a view to public civil good, but purely and immediately for the sake of God and religion.

Upon the whole then I think it appears that the magistrate is concerned to take care of natural religion, both directly and indirectly: indirectly, as he is the guardian of the public civil good, which has a necessary dependance upon natural religion; and directly, as, in virtue of an immediate obligation, he is also the guardian of religion.

SECT. II.

Of the Magistrate's Right to encourage true Religion under the Gospel Revelation.

PROPOSITIONS.

1. Whatever right the magistrate had to support and encourage true religion under the law of nature; the same right he has to encourage true religion now under the Gospel, if the Gospel has made no difference.

2. The Gospel hath made no difference. For if it has, this difference must have arisen either, 1. from hence, that the Gospel hath somewhere prohibited the Christian magistrate to support and encourage Christianity; or, 2. from hence, that, in the nature of the thing, there is not the same reason why the Christian magistrate should concern himself with Christianity, as there is why the magistrate, Christian or not Christian, should concern himself with natural religion. But neither of these allegations is true: therefore the Gospel has made no difference.

To make good what I say concerning the first branch of the foregoing disjunction, it is enough to observe that no such prohibition is to be found in the Gospel. To make good what I say as to the second, it will be needful to look back to those reasons which have been offered to prove the magistrate's right to encourage natural religion, and to shew that they infer the same things with respect to revealed religion, i. e. *with respect to Christianity, which is now supposed to be the true revealed religion. Now these reasons referring to the double capacity in which the magistrate may be considered,* (viz. *his capacity as guardian of the public civil good, and his capacity as guardian of religion;) they must therefore be distinctly spoken to. And.*

1. *As guardian of the public civil good.*

3. It hath been shewn that the magistrate is concerned to take care of natural religion, because the public civil good has a necessary dependance upon the behaviour of the subject, which is always influenced by religion or the want of religion. Now this reason will extend the magistrate's concern even to Christianity. For as morality is the foundation of a good civil behaviour; so Christianity is evidently a great support of morality. I will not deny but that a man may be morally good who is no Christian: and fact shews that government may well subsist where there is no revelation. But it is nevertheless true that morality is greatly

secured by the religion of the Gospel, whose precepts and whose motives are both an improvement and enforcement of the law of nature. Supposing then, but not granting, that the magistrate is not concerned to take care of Christianity for its own sake; he is notwithstanding concerned to take care of it, for the sake of morality.

4. What is here said of Christianity in general and at large, is proportionably true of its particular branches. For the whole subsists by its parts: and whatever weakens or destroys one part of the Christian revelation, has a manifest tendency to weaken and destroy all the rest. The observance or non-observance of positive institutions has no necessary immediate connection with morality; yet it concerns the magistrate that the observance of them be encouraged for the sake and on the account of morality. For these institutions were appointed as instruments to secure the righteousness of the Gospel; which (as has before been observed) is both the safeguard and perfection of morality. But farther yet, and

5. It has been shewn that the magistrate is concerned to take care of natural religion, because the happiness of society is concerned in the favour, or displeasure of Almighty God, considered as the author of temporal blessing, or temporal cursing; which reasoning may in its full force be applied as well to points of revealed religion. There may be iniquity against a revealed and positive, as well as

against a natural and moral law. Now all iniquity is the proper subject of the Divine correction. And we must not forget the instances we meet with in Scripture, where God threatens to punish the Jews for their disobedience to his own institutions. As he tenders then the public good, the magistrate is so far concerned to take care of the laws and institutions of revealed religion, as to see (as much as in him lies) that they be not either ignorantly mistaken, or carelessly neglected, or insolently and prophanely vilified and set at nought.

Thus far we have considered the magistrate as guardian of the public civil good; it remains now that we consider him,

2. *As guardian of religion; in which respect it is plain that the supposition of a revelation, or of no revelation, can make no difference.* For

6. If the magistrate has a right to take care of natural religion, merely because it is religion, (which is the case), it will follow that he is concerned to take care of any positive law or institution, when, in virtue of the divine authority enjoining or commanding it, it comes to be religion. This, I say, must be the consequence, upon supposition that it be needful that such divine, positive, laws or institutions, be supported and encouraged by human authority. I observe then,

7. That the laws of revealed religion have need to be supported and encouraged by human authority, as well as the laws of natural religion. For

those vices and passions by which men are apt to be led to the neglect and disobedience of the laws of natural religion, have a like tendency to lead them to neglect and disobey the laws of revealed religion: and therefore the same remedies which are needful with respect to the one, are needful also with respect to the other.

The conclusion then is; that the magistrate's right to encourage both natural and revealed religion, stands upon one and the same foundation.

CHAP. IV.

CONTAINING AN ANSWER TO THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS.

THE doctrine I would advance being thus far deduced, by way of direct and positive proof, from principles (as I hope) plain and evident; I come now to consider the most material objections that have been made against it. Of which that the reader may have a clear and distinct view, he is desired to recollect, that the right pleaded for in the foregoing chapters, is a right in the civil magistrate, by the methods above specified, to support and encourage, not religion in general, but the true religion only. And great necessity was there for stating the question in these terms, because there can be no pretence that the magistrate, or any one else, can have a right to encourage a false

religion; at least, not under the notion and formality of a false religion. Hence then ariseth a very material question, *viz.* by whose judgment must the magistrate be determined, which, among the variety of religions professed in the world, is the true religion, which alone ought to be encouraged: and the answer seems plain and obvious; to wit, that he must be determined by his own. For the encouraging religion is to be considered as a branch of the magistrate's conduct, for which he stands accountable to God the Supreme King and Governor of the Earth; and in which therefore, as well as in all other matters where reason and conscience is concerned, his own judgment must be his immediate rule.

I. Now this observation makes way for the first objection, which is this, that since it is allowed that the magistrate is to judge for himself what is the true religion; to say that the magistrate hath a right to encourage the true religion, is to say that he hath a right to encourage that religion which he thinks or believes to be the true religion; which gives every magistrate an equal right to encourage his own religion, and alike justifies the encouragement of falsehood in opposition to truth, (if it be received by the magistrate under the notion of truth) and of truth in opposition to falsehood. But this consequence I utterly deny. For right (in the sense wherein I speak of right) is founded in the nature and reason of things, which

the persuasions of men cannot alter: and error, how far soever it may excuse, will never justify. It is true of every man, as well as of the magistrate, that he must be determined by his own judgment in considering what is reasonable or unreasonable, what is fitting or unfitting. But if a man should think it reasonable to take away my goods, this will not give him a right to do it; for one man's error cannot take away another's property. So likewise it is true of the magistrate in civil affairs as well as in religious, that his own judgment must be the rule of his own conduct. But does any one argue from hence that he has therefore a right to oppress and tyrannize over his subjects, in case his judgment should direct him to unreasonable methods of civil administration? Either say that the inference is just in one case, or give it up in both: for the parallel, as every one sees, leaves no room for distinction. Were it only said, that because the magistrate's own judgment is the rule of his own conduct, therefore it will be his duty, or he will be obliged to encourage that religion, which he believes to be the true; and consequently to encourage a false religion, if he believes it to be the true; the conclusion would be no other than what the principles I am pleading for do naturally and necessarily infer. But it may be observed, and ought carefully to be attended to in all disputes of this nature, that a man may be bound to do many things which yet he hath no

right to do: and this is always the case when men are led aside by the mistakes of their judgments, which are enough to create an obligation, but cannot, as I said just now, affect the nature of things, so as to make them in any respect otherwise than they were before. There is indeed a sense in which the magistrate may be said to have a right to do a thing which in itself is wrong; and that is as the word is used relatively to human government, and implies only an exemption from civil jurisdiction on the one hand, and a subjection to it on the other. In this sense of the word, I say, the magistrate may sometimes have a right to be obeyed even in unreasonable laws, because in him resides the supreme authority on earth, whose injunctions it may not always be permitted to the subjects to dispute. But as this is not the right which I am contending for, so neither is it that which our adversaries mean. For the right which they mean, is such a right as is supposed to result from error in the magistrate; whereas the right I now speak of, as is plain, has no relation to error, but is the same whether the magistrate judgeth right, or whether he judgeth wrong.

To those therefore who charge it upon our principles, that they authorize the establishing all sorts of errors; I must take leave to reply, that they do but betray either great carelessness in not distinguishing the plainest things, or great unfairness in loading with calumny, what they do not

find it so easy to disprove. I say it again, and must insist upon it, that an erroneous judgment, though it obliges, cannot authorize. And if any one will oppose me in this, let him say roundly that every man is authorized to do whatever he thinks is right and fitting; or, in other words, that every one's own opinion is the measure of right and wrong; and see how it will be received. All that can with truth be said is, that every one's own opinion is to him the measure of right and wrong; which comes up exactly to what I affirm, and goes no farther, to wit, that every man is under an obligation to do what his own judgment directs him to, as if it were right: for right and wrong have their determinate limits, which are always and every where the same. Perhaps our adversaries will tell us, that this is all that they mean themselves. Well; let us but understand them, and I am satisfied. But if this be all, the terror of the objection vanishes at once, which seems to be entirely founded in the ambiguity of the terms by which it is expressed. To say absolutely that it is a just and a righteous thing to establish error, is to destroy the eternal difference between good and evil: and the principles which are justly chargeable with any such inference, ought, without any farther hearing, to be rejected as absurd. But to say that the magistrate under certain circumstances may be obliged to establish error, is saying no more of him in his station and capacity than

what is every day seen of others in theirs: and it will require something more than the bare naming it, to give it the force and weight of an argument. We can very well bear to have it told us, that the Heathen magistrates were under an obligation to make laws to discourage Christianity, upon supposition that they were persuaded that it was a false religion; and that Papists are also obliged to make laws against Protestantism, in case they believe it to be a false way of worship: all this, I say, we can very well bear; provided it be allowed us (which in common sense and reason ought to be allowed us) that such persuasions do not affect or alter the intrinsic nature of things: that there is still a certain, essential, difference between truth and falsehood, about which how much soever men may mistake, perfect wisdom never can: and that Christians and Protestants in their use of means for the support and encouragement of the truth may be justified; whilst Heathens and Papists, in making use of the very same means in opposition to the truth, will be left unjustified. In a word, I care not how far men are pleased to carry the obligation arising from an erroneous conscience; provided they do not go about to sanctify those unrighteous actions, which a man may be led to through the sense, and in virtue of this obligation.

II. The point then being brought to this issue, *viz.* that the principles above laid down give no

right or authority to the magistrate to establish his own errors; we must next see what will naturally follow from allowing (what indeed cannot be denied) that he is obliged or bound to do it. And the consequence is indeed plain; that since it is the duty of every magistrate to encourage that religion which he in his own judgment believes to be the true; it will in fact happen, that error will many times be encouraged in the room of truth. And if it should so fall out (which has for the most part been the case) that the greater part of the governing powers throughout the world do embrace error; error will most generally be established. All this I say is undoubtedly true. But what follows farther? Why, here we are usually entertained with the general harangues upon the deplorable state of religion in Popish and Mahometan countries. But there is no point which more stands in need of a proper distinction than this: and how terrible soever the objection may seem, the reader will find that I have nothing to fear from it, when I have replied to it, upon two hypotheses. For

1. If the meaning of the objection be barely this, that human laws, when made use of to encourage a false religion, will do much hurt to the true; and that therefore the magistrate, who may be mistaken in judging what is true religion, ought not to be vested with the power of encouraging it by human laws: if this objection, I say, goes no farther than this, the premises are true, but the

conclusion is false, because it proves a great deal too much, *i. e.* more than the objectors themselves intend, and more than in common sense and reason can be admitted of. The objection is commonly applied to worldly motives, *i. e.* to outward restraint only. But in reality, it lies against all methods, as well as against one. For since it is in the nature of all methods that can be made use of to support true religion, that they will hurt true religion if they be employed against it; and since you can allow of no means to be made use of for the support of truth, which must not also be allowed to be made use of for the support of error, in case error happens to be received as truth: the consequence is, that if this be admitted as a good reason why outward restraint ought to be laid aside, it will be as good a reason why all other methods ought to be laid aside as well as this. That the reader may feel the weight of this reply, he need only to take the objection in their own words, and try if it may not be applied with equal strength against any method he can think of.* "The case "then (say they) is this; that the rule being once "laid down that the civil magistrate is to add the "sanctions of this world to religion: it becomes "the indispensable duty of every magistrate to "annex them to that which he himself esteems to "be true religion.—So that if he himself be of a "false religion, he is obliged in conscience by

* Answer to the Committee, p. 167.

" this rule, to promote it by his worldly sanctions " if he believes it to be a true one. A Mahome- " tan, a Pagan, a Jew, a Papist, are every one of " them under the same obligation to promote the " profession of their own religion, and their own " way of worship." Thus goes the objection. I will now ask, whether the same argument may not as well be applied to *public instruction* and *persuasion*. And the thing is plain and undeniable. For " the case (say I) is this, that the rule being once " laid down, that there ought to be persons ap- " pointed by public authority to instruct the igno- " rant in the knowledge of God's true religion; " it becomes the indispensable duty of those in " whom this authority is lodged, to appoint such " persons as will teach those doctrines, which they " themselves shall judge to be true religion; and " consequently such persons as shall teach a false " religion if they believe it to be a true one. And " thus a Mahometan, a Pagan, a Jew, a Papist, " (and as many other sects as you can conceive) " are under the same obligation to promote their " own religion, and their own way of worship." Will true religion be hurt by this misapplication of instruction, or will it not? It is plain that it will, so long as there are men in the world (and multitudes there will always be of such) who are capable of being imposed upon by false reasoning. But this perhaps you will say is what our adversaries would have; who being for removing the care of

religion entirely out of the magistrate's hands, must be supposed to allow that he has as little to do to make any public provision for the administration of instruction, as to make any other provision whereby religion may be supported and encouraged. Right. But even here the objection does not end. It reaches to all private methods of instruction, and shews (if it shews any thing) that parents ought to lay aside that timely care, which nature as well as religion teaches them to exercise towards their children. For it is true of parents as well as of pastors and magistrates, that their own judgment is their rule; and nobody needs to be told that much mischief will follow, if, being themselves mistaken in their notions of religion, they breed up their children in error and superstition.

I will not stay to enlarge upon these matters; for in short there is nothing in the objection as thus stated, which may not be made use of as an argument against any thing, which either through the weakness or through the corruption of men may be applied to a bad purpose. If our adversaries will not grant that the magistrate has any thing to do with religion, they will own at least that he has to do with the public civil good. And in truth if he has nothing to do either with the one or with the other, there is an end of all government. And the matter will at last come to this, if the present way of reasoning be allowed to be

just. For the case is clear, that what through ignorance of the true means to secure the public good on the one hand, and what through avarice and ambition on the other, there may be a misapplication of power; and then all those evils will follow with respect to the civil concerns of men, which in virtue of a like misapplication will follow with regard to their religious. If Mr. Locke had well considered this, he would have found less cause to make himself merry with those; who,* *because all men are promiscuously apt to be misled by passion and lust, are for putting the care of religion into the hands of those* (meaning the magistrates) *who are as apt to be misled by passion and lust as themselves.* For let me ask: is not the very reason of civil government founded in this, that men are apt to be misled by their passions and lusts? And is not the chusing of a magistrate (supposing his office to reach no farther than to the concerns of this life) an instance beyond all exception, that it is reasonable, in order to prevent those evils which would arise from the lusts and passions of many, to bring them under the power of one, or of a few, who are as liable to be misled by lust and passion as themselves? What odd work is this! You would have magistrates, not men, but creatures above them. With all my heart, if you can tell where to find them. But so long as we are men, we must be contented to be governed (if we

* 3d Letter for Toleration, p. 31.

will be governed at all) by men. And if so, the reason is yet wanting, why those evils which arise from the misapplication of power, are an objection against the magistrate's right in one case, and no objection in another; although the evils which may be apprehended, are, according to their respective natures, the same in both. What is said of civil government in general, is true of all those several ways and means by which civil government is supported and maintained. I will instance only in the case of war, which has been always adjudged to be a lawful and proper means of defence, when one nation invades the property of another nation, and there is no other way left to bring them to reasonable terms. But how stands the case, admitting the present objection to be just? Why for ought that I can perceive, the magistrate is as much to blame when he engages his subjects in a war for the defence of the State, as when he makes laws for the support of religion: for "the "case will again be this, that the rule being once "laid down, that the magistrate is to make war in "defence of civil right and property; every ma-"gistrate will make war in defence of that which "he calls right and property, and consequently in "the defence of what was gotten by rapine and "oppression, if he calls that right and property." Where is the difference between the argument as applied to one case, and as applied to the other? I declare I can see none; and fact justifies it alike

in both. If our adversaries can give instances of false opinions, supported by human laws, under the notion of true religion; it will be no hard matter to give them as many instances of false claims, supported by force of arms, under the notion of civil right: and if we take the world round, I believe it will be found, that for one war justly entered into, there have been ten undertaken through avarice and the lust of power. The evil is great in both cases without doubt. But what then? Does any one think this to be a good reason against the use of war? Must one nation sit down and tamely submit to be ravaged by another; because magistrates may be wicked and ambitious, or because mistakes may be committed in judging about right and property?——It is high time to have done; for we are now going to dispute the very first principles of common sense.

Upon this foot then you see, the objection is palpably defective: and that I may shew wherein it is so, and thereby lead the reader to a true state of the question, I must observe; that as the impulsive cause which moved men at first to enter into society, was the experience they had that mankind, though reasonable creatures, are generally disposed to be led aside by their vices and their passions: so, that which determines them in the choice of a magistrate, *i. e.* of any particular person or persons, to be vested with authority to controul the rest, is a supposition that such person

or persons will make a just and a proper use of the power that is given them. If this supposition were founded upon an absolute certainty, it would then be reasonable to put any power into the magistrate's hand, which being applied as it ought to be applied, will do good. But there being no such absolute certainty so long as men are men: thus much must be yielded to our opposers, that in vesting the magistrate with power, great regard ought to be had to those consequences, which may probably ensue in case that power falls into ill hands. And the rule I conceive is this; that where the consequences which may in reason ordinarily be apprehended from the misapplication of any power are as bad as, or worse than, those which may be apprehended from the want of such power; that no such power ought to be given. On the contrary, it must be reasonable to put any power into the magistrate's hand, which being rightly used will procure greater good, than the misapplication of it will ordinarily procure evil. This is the case of civil government in general, the entire want of which would be attended with worse consequences than those which can ordinarily arise from mal-administration. The like may be said of war, without the use of which no government can possibly subsist. And in all these cases, the rule proceeds upon this allowed maxim, that of two evils the least is always to be chosen. Wherefore,

2. To make the objection any thing to the purpose, it must stand thus; that because the consequences which will ordinarily happen from magistrates making use of an authority given them to support true religion, toward the encouraging false religions, are such, that upon the whole it would be better for religion, if magistrates had no such authority given them; therefore no such authority ought to be given them. And if this be what our adversaries would say, the conclusion indeed will be just, but then the premises are certainly false; or at least will contain a great deal more than can be proved to be true. For how do they prove it? Why, as I said before, by bidding us *look into the Popish, Pagan, and Mahometan countries.* Well; It is done: and what do I see? Enough I own to move the pity and indignation of every serious and good man. But yet I am not certain (nor do I think it possible for them to shew me) that if there never had been any public provision made for the support of religion by civil magistrates, the state of religion throughout the world would not have been in a far more deplorable condition, than it is now under all the corruptions above mentioned. For by these provisions a general sense of religion and of morality, an awe for a Supreme Invisible Power, which is the foundation of all religion, are, amidst all the corruptions so much complained of, tolerably preserved. If any man thinks otherwise, let him compare the state of

religion in Turkey, China, or any civilized country, with the religion of the Hottentots, who are as free from all restraints of civil power, as they are from all sense of religion. The same thing may be said of Christianity, which, if left destitute of all support from human laws, might, for ought that appears at least to the contrary, have by this time been every where degenerated into a superstition worse than that of Popery. But this is a point which I have no need to dispute; because I am not bound, nor indeed is it right, to make an estimate of those consequences which will ordinarily happen from the misapplication of power, from what has happened in Turkey, or in Spain, or elsewhere. The competition at present is between an establishment and no establishment. Now it is plain that the bad consequences which are visible in those countries, have arisen not merely from hence, that every magistrate has established his own religion; but from some particular way or manner of establishing religion, which as yet I am at full liberty either to approve of, or to condemn. There may be some ways of providing for the support of religion, the consequences of which may (for ought I know) be worse than the consequences of no provision at all. Let us suppose dragooning, imprisoning, burning, and the like, to be of this sort. But as it is evident that these methods are not essential to an establishment; it is obvious also that what concludes

against the former, will not therefore conclude against the latter. It may be true that some sorts of establishments are wrong; but it will not follow from thence that there ought to be no establishment at all.

To draw this point then towards a conclusion; I say in a few words, that the true way of computing the difference in this case, will be to consider every particular way, by which true religion may be supposed capable of being supported and encouraged; and see what will be the consequence in case the same methods be made use of to promote error. This will be more distinctly spoken to in the next chapter, wherein the several branches of the magistrate's authority will be particularly treated of. At present we are only considering establishments in general, which in the most simple and absolute notion must (as I have often hinted) be understood to imply one or other of these two things, *viz.* a right in the magistrate to make a public provision for the administration of instruction; and a right also to apply outward restraint, as a check to the carelessness and wantonness of men. Either of these by itself will create what may be termed an establishment: though an establishment will be much better by the former without the latter, than by the latter without the former. But as they are subservient the one to the other; so that establishment will be most perfect where they both of them subsist

together. These two particulars must therefore in general be cleared from the present objection. And as to the first, I think there can be no pretence in saying that the consequences of instruction, supposing it to be promiscuously applied both for and against the truth, will be worse than the consequences of no instruction; *i. e.* (for it will at last come almost to the same thing) of no public provision made for instruction. For the one method tends only to the promoting of error among some persons, and in some places; whereas the other paves the way to universal ignorance and depravity of manners. According to my rule (say you) as a Protestant magistrate will be obliged to provide that his subjects be instructed in the Protestant religion; so a Popish magistrate will be obliged to provide that his be instructed in the doctrines of Popery; and a Mahometan that his be instructed in the doctrines of Mahomet. Very true. But better is it that Christianity be taught somewhere, than that it be taught no where. Better to have religion, though blended with some false and corrupt notions, than to have no religion at all. The like may be said of outward restraint, which may be so adapted as to the degree and measure of it; that supposing it every where made use of alike, it will upon the whole, and in the conclusion, be more for the interest of religion, than if, being wholly laid aside, every man were left free without check or controul to follow the

bent of his own passions. The great objection is, that outward restraint stops the way to all reformation where it is wanting: and whatever method has this effect is most certainly wrong; because it is to be apprehended that the misapplication of such a method will ordinarily do more mischief, than the right use of it will do good. But if this be the case of some kinds of outward restraint only, and not of all: if such a check may be given to those who differ from the national religion, as will be of great service where truth is encouraged; and yet leave room for the beating down of error in those countries where it happens to be established in the room of truth: if this I say be the case, I should hope it will be allowed that the objection is sufficiently answered. And that this is the case, will be shewn (as I said before) when we come to determine the precise boundaries of the magistrate's authority. In the mean while, what would follow from an absolute indulgence, we may be allowed to conjecture from what has ever happened, where such an indulgence has been admitted of. In the Heathen world human invention was very much indulged; the consequence of which was, that Gods were multiplied without number, and superstition increased without end. These corruptions perhaps you will charge to the want of proper instruction: but what will you say to the corruptions which have grown up under the *profession* of the Gospel? The Gospel itself is

the best instruction, yet it was soon polluted in its doctrines, as well as in its practices: and it is observable that the first three hundred years produced a greater variety of absurd opinions, than have been produced in above a thousand since. The reasons of this have heretofore been opened at large; and it is not needful now to repeat them: for in short every man of common observation must agree, that an absolute indulgence must ever be attended with bad consequences. Now if there be any method of applying outward restraint by which these consequences will either wholly, or in a good degree, be avoided, and no evils arise sufficient to balance them on the other side, (which is what I hope to shew;) the reasonableness of empowering the magistrate to make use of such a method, will no longer bear the being disputed. Wherefore,

III. Having thus removed the most considerable objections, those which follow will be answered with less difficulty. It is said then, that "the "annexing the motives of this world to the pro-"fession of any particular religion, is a great "temptation to hypocrisy;" and hence they argue, that "the use of them ought to be laid "aside." But this argument is faulty in the same respect with the former, and may therefore be replied to the same way. If it be a good reason against the use of worldly motives, that they may be drawn into an occasion of sin; it must be as good a reason against every thing which may be

drawn into an occasion of sin; in which way of reasoning a hundred things will be proved to be wrong, which yet no man in his right senses ever imagined to be so. If a child knows he shall be beaten for his faults, this will be a temptation to him to tell lies. But did ever any one think this to be a sufficient argument against paternal correction? But I will put another case, which may be thought perhaps of greater moment, and that is the case of requiring an oath as a test or evidence of men's loyalty and affection to the government, which is plainly liable to the same exception. For is not the annexing civil privileges to the taking of an oath, as great a temptation to a man to swear against his conscience; as the annexing the like privileges to his going to church, or to his receiving the Sacrament, is to conform against his conscience? Have there not been as many led into perjury by the former method, as into hypocrisy and prevarication by the latter? And yet this is not allowed to be a sufficient objection against the common practice of requiring oaths, nor is it a sufficient objection in all instances. The truth in all these cases is one and the same; to wit, that where there are reasons sufficient to justify the use of any means; the liableness of such means to be perverted to a bad end, is never to be regarded. To *do evil that good may come*, is what we cannot justify; nor ought we needlessly to lay those *stumbling blocks in our brother's way*, which may be

unto him an occasion of falling. But we may, yea, we must, do good though evil should happen; and if that which contributes to the advantage of many, should be abused by a few, to their own mischief; they must bear the weight of it themselves: neither the means, nor they who propose and make use of the means have any thing to do with it.

IV. It is farther alleged that "worldly grandeur, gaeat power and riches, naturally tend to "take men's minds from true religion, and the "true motives of it." The meaning of which I presume is, that they tend to corrupt men's morals, and to make them careless in the business of religion; and we are farther told that * *the same things must have ordinarily the same effect upon all sorts of men in this state of probation.* What novelties are here! Common sense and experience shew plainly that ordinarily the same things have different effects, according as men are differently disposed. Riches and power are the gifts of God for great and excellent ends, which some use as they ought, and others as they ought not. But whatever the result of this be, the careful reader will observe, that the observation has no relation to the point in hand; because the mischiefs arising from the abuse of these things, will be the same under either method. There would be just as much grandeur, power, and riches in the world,

* Answer to Dr. Snape, p. 42.

though none of them were made use of to encourage true religion, though it is likely they would not fall into the same hands. But into whose hands soever they might fall, they would have the same tendency to take their minds from true religion, unless you think that because a man embraces the true religion, he is therefore the less qualified to make a proper use of God's blessings. I am not therefore able to see to what this objection tends, unless it be to impeach the Providence of God, which it effectually doth; it being just as good an argument to prove, that there ought to have been no such things as worldly greatness, power, and riches, as that the magistrate ought not to make use of them for the support of religion. So that if they do not mean this, let them confess their mistake: but if they do, I pray God give them a better mind; that if he hath dealt with them (as he does with the very best of us) better than they deserve, they may acknowledge his goodness with thankfulness, and not, like pampered horses, kick and spurn at him that feeds them.

V. Lastly, (for this is the only remaining cavil) it has been alleged that "because Almighty God "has annexed the sanctions of another and a "future state to Christ's laws; this is the very "reason why worldly sanctions should not be "annexed to them: because of two sorts of mo-"tives, without doubt perfect wisdom chuses the

"most proper sort." But to this a short answer will suffice, *viz.* that perfect wisdom may chuse a variety of motives, all of them proper in their respective places and degrees: and that his having chosen the motives of another world, carries not with it so much as the face of an argument to shew that he hath not also chosen the motives of this. If you say that God hath not chosen the motives of this world, it shall be admitted for truth when you have proved it. But you cannot, I say, prove it merely from this consideration, that he hath chosen the motives of another. For my chusing a means in order to a certain end, doth not imply that to be the only means which I have chosen. To save you then all farther trouble, I maintain that in order to support and encourage true religion, God hath chosen the motives of this world, as well as the motives of another. Nor can it be denied, if it be true that he hath made it to be the magistrate's duty to apply these motives for the support and encouragement of true religion. Whether therefore this be true, or whether it be not true, I must leave the reader to judge from the arguments that have already been, and from such as shall hereafter be, laid before him.

CHAP. V.

WHEREIN THE AUTHORITY OF THE MAGISTRATE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION IS MORE DISTINCTLY AND PARTICULARLY CONSIDERED.

I HAVE now done with the point in general; and the conclusion comes to this, and no more than this, *viz.* that the magistrate, as such, has a right, by the methods of civil administration, to support and encourage true religion, both natural and revealed. And in order to this end that he hath authority, at the public expence, to provide that instruction be duly and regularly administred to the people; and to apply temporal motives on the side of true religion, in such a sort as may be proper to check and restrain the inordinate passions of men. But by what ways he is to provide for the administration of instruction, and how far he may go in the use and application of worldly motives, are questions which still afford matter for a more distinct inquiry. For differences may sometimes arise from special reasons, and particular cases may be assigned, which shall stand excepted from general rules.

These points therefore must be minutely entered into. And as a foundation for the whole, it will be proper to observe, that the rule or law to which the supreme power in any commonwealth is subject in the execution of his office is, 1. the universal

law of reason, either alone by itself, or assisted by the light of revelation: and 2. those human appointments (if any such there are) which have been agreed upon by the whole body as the groundwork of their polity, and the conditions upon which they have consented to become a society under such a particular head or supreme governor. These previous appointments, I say, do so far bind the magistrate, that without the consent of the whole society, he cannot lawfully act in opposition to them. But with these we have at present nothing to do. For the question being concerning the authority of the supreme power at large, and not as limited by the particular constitutions of particular commonwealths; it must therefore be considered as subject to no other laws than those which are common to every society as such, *i. e.* to the law of reason only: which, if the person or persons, in whom such supreme power is vested, contradict, they are guilty of a breach of their duty, first, to God, whose law the law of reason is; and secondly, to their subjects, who are reasonable creatures, and cannot therefore be presumed to have consented to be governed any otherwise than as reasonable creatures ought to be governed.

This being premised, I come to the particulars under consideration. And as to the first, to wit, the providing for the due administration of instruction, it is evident, as has before been noted, that there are divers ways in which it may be done.

The settling a maintenance for parochial preachers; erecting schools, and other public nurseries of good literature, and pious education; and the protecting and encouraging those who are willing to contribute towards carrying on such useful designs, are all of them in their respective orders and degrees, means proper to this end. Nor can any exception in point of lawfulness, lie against one more than against another. The same reasons which justify the first, will justify all the rest; and it may be said in general that the more is done in any of these ways, so much the better. This only must be considered, that in making provisions of this sort, a due regard should be had to the safety of the commonwealth, as well as to the immediate interests of religion. The teachers of religion should not be suffered to struggle with poverty, whilst the state abounds in wealth: nor should the magistrate so far give way to an indiscreet zeal, as under the notion of doing honour to God, to bring a real mischief upon the State (and in the end upon religion too) by being unreasonably and immoderately profuse in his donations. A due temper should be preserved between both extremes, that whilst as the servants of God we rejoice at the encouragement that is given to the labours of those who minister to his glory and our common salvation, we may not as the subjects of men, and as members of civil society, find reason to complain of too much penury. Religion, as it

serves to the good of all, has a very just plea to be supported at the public expence; but it ought not to be, nor indeed can it be, supported by public extravagancy. For this weakens the State; and it is evident that in proportion as the State grows unable to support itself, it must grow unable to support religion. These are plain things, and therefore need no longer to be insisted on. I shall only add, that whatever right the legislative power has over the public stock; the same right it has over all benefactions, made or given by private persons for the public support and encouragement of religion. For these having a certain influence either good or bad upon the whole community; as they cannot be established at first without the magistrate's consent, so they must for the same reason be subject to his regulations for ever afterwards.

By these ways then the magistrate has a right to provide for the due administration of instruction, in the true religion. And not only hath he a right, but it is his duty, both as the servant of God, and the guardian and protector of the commonwealth, thus to provide for it, so far as the exigencies of the State will give him leave. Now this being admitted, it will not I conceive bear being disputed, whether he hath a right also by the same methods, equally to provide for the administration of instruction in such false methods of religion, as may be set up in opposition to the true. The pro-

posal is at first sight ridiculous. For what is it but to ask whether the magistrate hath not a right to pull down with one hand, what he is in duty bound to build up with another? I speak this of one and the same magistrate, at the same time, and in the same country. For as to different magistrates, either in the same or in different dominions, they may be subject to different rules. No magistrate (as I have before shewn) can have properly a right to encourage a false way of worship: but (which, so far as human conduct is concerned, will come to the same thing) every magistrate is obliged to encourage that religion which he believes or judges to be the true; and consequently it must be owned, and has been admitted, that if any magistrate embraces a false religion, he will be bound to provide that instruction be administred for the support of that false religion, in the same manner as if it were the true. And this is a caution which I must desire the reader constantly to bear in his mind, *viz.* that whensoever I maintain the magistrate's right to make use of any method for the support of the true religion; the obligation to make use of the same method in case error happens to be received as truth, is always supposed and taken for granted. Here all the difficulties center, which attend upon the question, which it is my design not to avoid; but, so far as I am able, to remove: and the way to do it, as I observed above, will be to state the consequences

fairly on both sides, and see on which side the advantage lies. How the account stands as to other particulars, will be considered with respect to each of them as they come in course. But as to this, having before remarked it as an evident truth, that the consequences which would arise from the want of instruction (which in the ordinary state of the world will be prevented no other way than by these and such like public provisions) are far worse than those which attend the promiscuous use of instruction, both for, and against, the truth: I look upon it to be entirely out of the reach of the objection, and consequently have no need to say any more to it here.

Thus much therefore being briefly spoken concerning the first of those methods, by which the magistrate may support and encourage true religion; I proceed now to the other two, which consist in the application of temporal motives, *i. e.* of rewards and punishments directly and immediately as a means to curb and restrain men's passions, and thereby to provide that the people may attend upon the instructions of their teachers, and that such instructions may obtain their proper effect. Now to avoid all ambiguities which may arise from the different use of words, it will be proper to acquaint the reader, that by punishments I understand all those administrations by which a man is molested, hurt, or vexed, in any matter or thing, to the free use and enjoyment whereof, he

hath antecedently a right or property either natural or civil; whether this property concerns his life, his body, his liberty, or his goods. By rewards on the other hand, I mean those whereby he is obliged, pleased, or benefitted by any thing, which, without any such antecedent claim, he enjoys merely through the good will or favour of the donor. Of this latter sort I reckon posts of honour, profit or power, under the supreme magistrate, which when withholden are very properly termed NEGATIVE DISCOURAGEMENTS, because they do not consist in inflicting positive evils, but only in the withholding some distant good, which otherwise a man might have enjoyed. I suppose all this while some moral action either good or evil, hurtful or beneficial, pleasing or displeasing, as the ground or reason upon which a man is molested or gratified: and this is what the common use of language leads us to suppose. If one man beats another out of pure wantonness, he wrongs him indeed, but we do not say he punishes him. And if I give an alms to a poor man who stands begging at my door, you may say that I am charitable if you please, but you cannot say that I reward him.

Rewards and punishments therefore, in the idea of them, always refer back to merit and demerit: and the question is, how far the adhering to the true established religion is that merit in consideration whereof the magistrate may reasonably

confer special favours and privileges: and how far a departure from, or opposition to it, is that demerit which will justify him in molesting his subjects, by depriving them of any right either natural or civil. To state this matter clearly, it will be necessary to resolve the whole into distinct cases. For that which is right in one case, may not be so in another. I take it for granted that wherever there is a right to apply punishments, there is a right also to make use of negative discouragements. For the greater always includes the less; and it is certainly more to take away from a man what is already his own by a proper right, than merely to deny him something which as yet he hath not; and which to obtain is a matter of grace or favour. Now since there are many cases in which the use even of penal laws will, I presume, be admitted of without much difficulty, I shall first mention these cases; and then come to the point upon which the controversy between us and our opposers, seems principally to depend. And,

I. The first is the case of those who, either in doctrine or in practice, break in upon the laws of natural religion. Concerning all which persons, I maintain in general and without exception, that they may and ought to be chastised and suppressed by any severity of penal laws, that shall be found necessary. The reasons are obvious. For, 1, here is a manifest injury done to the State, which cannot subsist but upon the principles of moral

virtue and honesty. 2. Here is also an affront offered to God, who having sufficiently promulged the law of morality, by that general reason which he hath given to mankind; all violations of that law (except in those who discover a manifest want of understanding, and are therefore not to be considered in the case) must be supposed to proceed from a heart estranged from him. Since therefore (as has been shewn) the nature of the magistrate's office leads us to consider him, both as the guardian of the public civil good, and as the protector of God's honour; it is manifest that upon both these accounts, he has a right to punish all immoral doctrines and practices wheresoever he finds them. For the same reasons I must also maintain,

II. That all violations of the laws of revealed religion, whether in doctrine or in practice, which are apparently founded in a contempt of religion, or arise evidently from vicious and immoral inclinations and habits, are cases punishable by the civil magistrate. Manifest and notorious insincerity seems to be of the same kind: for whatever right a man may have to act according to his conscience, he has certainly no right to be a knave. Nor are these cases always impossible to be distinguished. For, 1, this is manifestly the case of those who admit the revelation as true; and yet either vilify those doctrines which they profess to believe, or will not conform themselves to that rule or law of life which the revelation proposes. If a

man who professeth himself a Christian should at any time blaspheme Christ; or acknowledge himself bound as a Christian to frequent God's public worship, and to partake of the Sacrament, and yet at the same time live in an habitual neglect of either or of both; no man will say that he does not deserve correction. For either he is sincere in his profession, or he is not. If he is sincere, he is self-condemned in acting contrary to his profession; and if he is not sincere, but professes the established religion purely for the sake of some external advantages; even his insincerity is a fault which ought not to be excused. Under this head we are to place all such as give public evidence of their enmity to Christianity, whilst at the same time they regularly frequent the public assemblies of Christians, and (which I tremble to repeat) join in the most solemn and sacred mysteries of the Gospel. Great iniquity here is undoubtedly somewhere. If they are believers, they are the wickedest of men. If they are not, who can justify their prophane hypocrisy in making a shew of adoring the Redeemer whom they despise? This is iniquity even against their own law, (if indeed they have any law) the law of nature, which doth not admit of perfidiousness and lying as in the presence of the Almighty. One thing then might be, and ought to be, required of them under the severest penalties, *viz.* either that they forbear to profess what they do not believe, or that they cease

to affront Him whom they are ashamed openly to deny. As to those who openly disown the established revealed religion, we cannot always so certainly pronounce concerning them, by what motives they are influenced. Their private conduct may indeed many times afford ground for very strong presumptions: but this being such (for the most part) as wise men may better observe, than magistrates appeal to; it can have little to do in the present dispute. One thing however I must not forget to mention, as an evident token both to the wise and to the unwise, to the magistrate as well as to the people, of an evil and corrupted mind; and that is, 2. when men oppose points of revealed religion not in the way of modest and sober reasoning, but by turning them into ridicule and drollery. This is a practice not to be endured in any well governed commonwealth, as what both in its cause, and in its effects, bears too near an alliance with blasphemy and profaneness. And surely if any thing can provoke the Divine justice to abandon a nation, and to give them up to feed on the fruits of their own vanity and wickedness; it must be when his honour is so little set by, that men cannot adjust those differences which arise among themselves concerning his worship, with the same decency and good manners, that modesty leads us to observe in settling the common affairs of life. The majesty of God gives a sanction to every thing that has any tolerable pretence to

shelter itself under his authority, so far, at least, as to secure it from being insulted: and there is this respect due to the judgment of our superiors; that if we cannot think them in the right, we should not treat them as if they were fools.

By this, the reader may already conjecture that I am not against allowing free liberty to the subject, to question any established opinion or doctrine of revealed religion, which they shall judge to be false; and to offer their reasons against it, provided it be done with a fit temper and in a proper way. To speak my mind freely and without reserve; the thing is upon all accounts just and equitable: for the magistrate being fallible as well as others, he ought not obstinately to shut his eyes against new and better light; and it is certain that truth will suffer more when errors are rejected with too much stiffness, than when they are brought to a serious and impartial examination. But still I say, that there is a certain propriety and decorum in offering opinions to the trial, which the magistrate hath an undoubted right to insist upon. For all ways are not alike either hurtful or beneficial: and if a man be but fairly heard, in what way soever it be that he is heard, he will have no reason to complain. Wherefore,

III. There is one thing more which I would beg leave to suggest, as a matter not unworthy the consideration of our superiors; and that is, whether some kind of restraint guarded by penal laws

ought not to be laid upon ALL public opposers of revealed truths, any where established. And the reason of my asking the question is, because it appears to me, that popular appeals as they are commonly practised, are both wrong in themselves, and in their consequences more hurtful than beneficial to the interests of religion. As to the first, it should seem most agreeable to decency and good order, that when any man thinks, that he has any thing of moment to offer towards the reforming what he judges to be amiss; he should first apply himself to the magistrate, or to some person or persons purposely commissioned by him, to receive appeals of this nature; and that the question should be considered in such a manner as he, or they, should judge to be most expedient. By this means many needless and frivolous disputes would be avoided; many material ones, probably, settled in a more private way; and abundance of that mischief prevented, which naturally and unavoidably attends an unbounded licence to every man to vend crudities of any sort indifferently to all. Be errors ever so absurd in themselves, the poison will find its way into weak and sickly constitutions. Wise and good men expect wise arguments; but weak ones will satisfy the ignorant, the foolish, and the wickedly disposed. Now to this evil on the one hand, I find no good that can be opposed on the other, unless it be the benefit which may accrue to the truth from such a liberty, in case

error happens to be established in its room. But with this objection I have nothing to do. For what I plead for is, not that popular appeals should be absolutely forbidden, (which is the only reasonable ground upon which the objection can proceed;) but that, where differences arise concerning any point of religion, any where established, the magistrate ought to have the liberty of the first hearing, in order, if it be possible, to cut off all necessity of appealing to the public; which, in a greater degree or in a less, is ever attended with inconveniencies. This limitation perhaps may seem of little use to us as matters now stand; and I do not mention it as practicable in our present circumstances. But if there were in every establishment, (as in every establishment there ought to be) a constant court to receive complaints of all growing corruptions in the doctrine and practice of religion, as there are proper places to complain of all civil grievances and disorders; I make no doubt but we should soon feel the advantages of such a method: and if after this there should be liberty allowed of appealing to the whole world, by a faithful and honest representation of the reasons, and of the reasons only, on both sides, in case differences could not this way be brought to an accommodation; I see not, for my part, what it is that a reasonable man could desire more. For here is all the liberty allowed to truth, that truth can want; and this just and equitable restraint

only laid upon error, that she shall not be suffered to forestall the opinions of men, nor by a hasty and partial view draw that esteem to herself, which in a fair way of reckoning she would be found not to deserve.

Whether such a liberty as this ought to be allowed of, and how far it may be subject to farther limitations, is a point which I do not now determine, but which shall be considered by and by. In the mean time that which has hitherto been advanced under this head cannot, I think, easily be found fault with: and he who should complain of such a method, if once our governors should think fit to establish it, would affect an indulgence, which even the tenderest concern for the liberty of the subject will never justify. In matters of a civil nature, the thing is plain and evident. For what government can be at ease, if every one be permitted to talk and write against the decisions of his superiors, in what manner he pleases? To obstruct all ways which lead to the removal of public grievances, is the spirit of tyranny, which in its consequences must end in slavery and oppression. But to throw all ways open at once, and to leave every one to chuse that which liketh him best, is on the other hand the spirit of weakness, and as naturally leads to disorder and confusion. Let governors then be apprized of all evils and corruptions in the State, whether new or old. But how? Why by such ways as they shall judge

to be most conducive to the public safety; which certainly will be in a very ill condition, if the mob is to be raised about their ears, whenever any conceited upstart shall think himself wise enough to mend the constitution.

As this which I have mentioned is the only method of keeping up a due distinction between superiors and inferiors; so it is a method which, in a greater degree or in a less, has ever been observed in all well constituted commonwealths. And where, I ask, would be the harm, or rather what good might we not expect, if the same temper were followed in things which pertain to religion? What if our religious news-writers, who deal out their low and wretched divinity by scraps, and turn the most serious and weighty questions, concerning God and his worship, into a coffee-house entertainment; what if our forward and busy pamphleteers, who make merchandize of the ignorance and credulity of the vulgar, and by their indigested conceptions in matters which they understand not, corrupt their principles and morals both; what, I say, if these and such like pestilent disturbers of the peace of the world, were laid under a prohibition, and (one orderly way of opening and considering all sorts of religious controversies being settled by public authority) libels against the Church were punished with the same severity as libels against the State? Certainly if there be any thing in the world which men ought

to enter upon with a serious temper of mind, and an humble dependance upon the Divine grace; it is the considering the grounds of their faith, and the chusing for themselves that religion, which, among the great variety of religions they see about them, appears to be most agreeable to the will of God. But is this the business of a coffee-house or of a tavern, when men come hot from the market or from the exchange; when their heads are full of their worldly concerns; when they are half asleep or perhaps half drunk? Is this, I say, a time when they are to be called upon to sit as judges in the affairs of their souls, and their everlasting salvation? I trust in God we shall once see the day, when it will be thought proper and seasonable to give some check to this prevailing evil. The mischief which such liberties bring upon religion is but too visible in that growth of infidelity and profaneness, which good men, with reason enough, lament and complain of in these days. And I must take leave to say, that scarce any thing will excuse the indulgence of them, but such an unhappy posture of affairs, as lays a necessity upon the magistrate to wink at many things, which otherwise would be (as indeed they ought to be) reformed.

You may think perhaps that I am laying an unreasonable burden upon the magistrate, and those who act as ministers under him, whilst I oblige them to attend the motions of all who may at any

time be disposed to innovate in matters of religion. Be not afraid. The difficulty is not so great as you may imagine. The case is this; that by the method which I now propose, all controversies in divinity would be entirely removed from the hands of impertinent and mercenary scribblers, into the hands of men of sense and learning; who, as they are the only persons fit to manage such controversies, so they would in common decency and for their own credit sake, forbear to make appeals, but where the real weight and importance of the cause would justify them in so doing. Small grievances are better born with, than ancient and standing customs laid aside: and if the magistrate would do his duty in removing great ones, he would soon find that he might keep the state of religion in a quiet and easy posture, with as little trouble as he manages the common affairs of State. But ignorant men, you will say, have their scruples as well as the wise and learned. Very true. But there is no necessity I hope that ignorant men should set themselves up either for divines or politicians. If their scruples be of any weight, they will not want men of greater abilities to patronize their cause. And if they be of so little consequence, that it is not worth while to trouble the magistrate with them; there will certainly be as little reason why they should trouble the world.

These cases being resolved, in which (as I conceive) the use even of penal laws will be admitted

without much difficulty; I now proceed to another, which the last naturally makes way for, and which leads directly to the main point in controversy. And the case may be thus stated, *viz.*

IV. What if an appeal being made to the magistrate, and the question considered in a proper way, the person who makes the appeal cannot be, or (which is all one) declares he is not, by the reasons offered, convinced of his error? There are but three ways possible in this case. For the magistrate may either, 1. use force to oblige him to retract his opinions; or, 2. he may enjoin him silence; or, 3. he may suffer him to publish his doctrines to the world, and make converts as he is able. Now if any one would know my judgment concerning the first of these three methods, I very freely declare that I think it absolutely unlawful. The magistrate has no right to oblige any man (in the circumstance supposed) to retract his opinions, even though they be erroneous: and the reason is plain, *viz.* because much evil may be done on the one side, and no good can follow on the other. If a man be constrained by outward force to retract his opinion, whilst his understanding remains unconvinced; he is constrained to act against his conscience, which is a great evil. And this may frequently be the case. Now what good can be expected from such a recantation? Plainly none at all. For all the virtue of a recantation lies in this, that it takes off the influence

which the authority of that single man's judgment would have upon others: and this indeed it will do, when the recantation appears to be hearty and sincere. But a disingenuous recantation (which every forced recantation will be presumed to be) can have no such effect. The requiring such a recantation shews indeed the magistrate's opinion, which may be as well made known by other methods: but the recantation itself not being the result of liberty and choice, will be no evidence of what the sufferer believes or judges. If a man in such a case as this should declare himself convinced; the magistrate might very reasonably require him to make the same declaration to the world. In this there is no hardship; and certainly it is but common justice that when a man has done an injury, he should be obliged to make the best amends he can. But, this case excepted, to force men to retract errors, is a great hardship not only upon flesh and blood, but upon conscience too, and answers no good end or purpose which may not as well be secured without it.

This method then being set aside, the competition will lie only between the other two, *viz.* whether the magistrate ought to suffer such a man to publish his opinions, and to make converts as he is able; or whether he hath a right to enjoin him silence. And concerning this matter, the reader may thus far have understood my mind beforehand, that I am inclinable to favour the side of

liberty. The reasonableness of this, I conceive, will hardly be questioned, upon supposition that such opinions create no separation from the national religion. For this shews that, in the judgment of both parties, the difference is of little or no consequence to religion, and therefore beneath the magistrate's concern. But if those who publish false opinions are, in virtue of such false opinions, separated, or do separate themselves, from the national way of worship, into some other way different from it, the case will require some farther consideration: and we are brought at last to the main point in controversy; which,

V. Concerns those, who (the true way of worship being established by law) set up, or join in, some false way in opposition to it. Now that the reader may the more clearly and distinctly perceive the real merits of the cause between us, there are these things to be noted concerning the state of the question, *viz.*

1. That the difference between those of the national religion and those who separate from it, is supposed to relate to matters of pure revelation only; that is, either to points of Christian faith or of Christian practice, in reference to those laws either of religious worship or religious discipline, which the Gospel hath superadded to the law of nature. For with respect to moral duties there can be no difference among reasonable men; and it hath been already shewn, and is on all hands

agreed, that all immoralities are punishable by the magistrate. Let it farther be supposed,

2. That the principles in virtue of which false ways of worship are set up in opposition to the true, are such as have no tendency to hurt or to overturn civil government. For it is certain that all such religions may be, and ought to be, suppressed upon a civil account, *i. e.* for the sake of civil society; the right of supporting which, cannot be suspended or taken away, by any scruples of conscience real or pretended. To make the case yet clearer, let it also be supposed,

3. That no civil disorders are occasioned by differences about religion. For whenever such disorders do arise, the magistrate hath an undoubted right to suppress them; I will not say, by using force to remove the differences which occasion those disorders (which is seldom necessary); but (which will ordinarily be sufficient) by punishing the disorders themselves, *i. e.* those who are concerned in such disorders.

The question then at last comes to this, *viz.* "What shall the magistrate do with those, who "(for ought that appears to the contrary) having "used a reasonable care to inform and satisfy "themselves, and being chargeable with no indecent or improper ways of questioning established "doctrines, differ from those of the national religion as to some points of pure revelation; and "in virtue of such difference in opinion, do,

" without any hurt or prejudice to the State as to " its civil concerns, set up or join in different ways " of worship?" This, I say, is the question; and a question it is (I very freely own) of great difficulty as well as importance. It is supposed, you see, in the case, that men may honestly differ in their opinions about points of revealed religion; and this indeed is necessary to be supposed, because otherwise it would admit of no dispute. For (as the learned Dean of Chichester has observed) " were religion in general—one plain uniform " thing, about which there was no more room to " disagree, than there is about the law of reason " and nature in moral points;—there would be " nothing with respect to religion left to the ma- " gistrate, but to use his power to enforce obe- " dience." * The reason is plain, *viz.* because there can be no hardship in compelling men to do, what they are obliged to do in virtue of the reason and understanding which God has given them. But the case is this, that the knowledge of the doctrines of revealed religion coming to us by another kind of evidence, than that whereby we receive the knowledge of the doctrines of natural religion: what through weakness of judgment in some, and what through habitual prejudices and prepossessions in others, men have differed, do differ, and (it is to be apprehended) always will differ concerning them. But then since the evi-

* Answer to Lr. p. 6.

dences of revealed religion, though not the same with the evidences of natural religion, are yet sufficient to convince; it must also be said (and it is equally true in fact) that as men, notwithstanding the best care, may differ in their opinions as to such points: so they may differ for want of care, or pretend a difference where there is none; and consequently may separate from the national religion, not honestly and with a good conscience, or because after due examination they are really persuaded that it is their duty so to do; but through idleness or wantonness, to please their humours and their fancies, or (which is worse) to serve some worldly ends which they have in view. This is the foundation of the whole difficulty that attends upon the question; and that I may shew you precisely wherein it lies, and withal set before you the true point which every magistrate ought to aim at, I must lay down the two following propositions: that is to say,

PROPOSITION I.

No VIOLENCE *ought to be offered to* CONSCIENCE. My meaning is (for this is the only sense in which conscience can be said to suffer violence) that *no* SUCH COMPULSION *ought to be used to bring men to profess the national religion, (even supposing it to be the true religion) as will be sufficient to lead them (unless they be endued with a more than ordinary*

measure of integrity and resolution) to act AGAINST *conscience.*

This proposition I am sensible I need not prove to our adversaries, because it contains nothing but what they contend for themselves. But for the sake of those who may think I incline too far on the favourable side, I shall offer a few reasons to support it. And,

1. It must be considered that whatever authority the magistrate may be supposed to have to make laws in matters of religion, it is an authority always subordinate to the authority of GOD; and consequently that he can make no law which shall oblige all persons, absolutely and without distinction, to join in the national way of worship. All that he can in reason require is, that all should join in the national way; who, consistently with conscience, (*i. e.* consistently with that prior and superior obligation which they are under with respect to God) are able to join in it; which implies a liberty granted (if that may be said to be granted which cannot in justice be denied) to those who are not able, to join in some other way. Now this seems to me to cut off all right of compulsion: for what right can the magistrate have to compel those whom he is either supposed not to command, or whom if he does command, he commands without authority? You will say perhaps that it is true in all cases, as well as in this, that the magis-

trate rules only in subordination to God; and consequently that, in virtue of this reasoning, it will be unjust to enforce obedience even to a civil law, where there is room to suppose that conscience may be concerned, and where conscience is actually pleaded as a bar against his authority. I answer; and so it would if compulsion were no more needful to support civil government, than it is to support religion. But this cannot be pretended. For if when the magistrate makes a law for the good of the commonwealth, it should be admitted as a sufficient excuse for a man to say, *I cannot obey, it is against my conscience;* there would at once be an end of his authority, and all government must fall to the ground. Wherefore since a consent to the end always implies a consent to the means necessary to that end; it must be supposed that every member of the society as such, has in these cases submitted his will to the will of the magistrate; so far, I mean, as to have obliged himself either to obey the law if he can, or to suffer the penalty, if he cannot. But the case is otherwise with respect to religion: for the support of which, compulsion is so far from being necessary, that it is not so much as proper, as I will now shew you. For,

2. Forasmuch as the same methods which are allowed to be made use of to support a true way of worship, must as well be allowed to be made use of to support a false one, in case it happens

to be received as true; this consideration will bring those who plead for compulsion as a proper method, under the whole weight of the objection drawn from the misapplication of authority, the ill consequences whereof are with great reason complained of. I have before laid it down as a rule, that power ought not to be put into the magistrate's hand, if the consequences which may ordinarily be apprehended from the abuse of that power, be as bad or worse than those which will follow from the want of it. Pray then consider; what is the good you propose by compulsion? It is, say you, the hindering separations from the true religion. Well; this effect it will undoubtedly have where truth is established. But then I think withal that this end will in the main, or in a very good degree, be secured without compulsion. For supposing the national religion to be the true religion; and supposing the use of all other methods to bring men to embrace it: it is not likely that the number of those who separate from it, will be very considerable; at least we may say with a great deal of assurance, that it will be incomparably less than the number of those who (if we may judge of what will be, by what always has been) will be hindered from embracing the truth, by the use of the same method to encourage falsehood. Whence it hath happened that the professors of false religions have ever in point of number had the advantage of the professors of the true, it is not needful

for me to inquire. The fact is plain and undeniable: and in judging concerning affairs of this nature, men should always take their measures from what they see before their eyes, rather than from what ought to be, or they could in reason wish to find. So that, I say, as no man can so far resign his will to the will of the magistrate, as to leave it to him to determine absolutely what way of worship he shall follow; so no man ought to consent to put such an authority of executing penalties into his hands, as instead of supporting religion upon the whole, tends to destroy it, by introducing more and greater mischiefs than it is intended to cure.

This weight then must be allowed to the objection, that it concludes strongly against all violent compulsive methods. And this I would have understood not only with respect to such differences as may arise between Christians and Christians; but with respect to those also by which Christians are distinguished from those who are not Christians. You will say perhaps that what room soever there may be for men to dispute about some particular points of Christianity; no man can sincerely reject the Gospel: and this I freely confess, that supposing proper abilities to judge, and that the evidences for it are considered without prejudice or partiality, no man can reject it. But it is hard to determine how far custom, education, and some odd preconceived notions which men innocently

enough fall into, may pervert their understandings: and this too must be remembered, that if none but Christians are to be suffered in a Christian country; it will follow, that none but Mahometans must be suffered in a Mahometan country; and the difficulty will remain just the same. I see no remedy then but that the same liberty must be allowed to both: and why should we be afraid? Hath our cause stood the trial for so many hundred years; and shall we now at last betray a mistrust, as if it could no longer be defended? Some mischief will certainly follow from this liberty among the more weak and corrupted part of mankind. But it is better to trust the issue of this with the good Providence of God; than to have recourse to a method of preventing it, which if every where made use of alike will lay the foundation for a more general calamity. I shall conclude this head with a passage of the most excellent Grotius, who, speaking of those who pretend to justify the use of severities, from what was commanded with respect to false prophets and seducers under the Jewish law, hath these words, which contain the main foundation upon which I build. *Sunt qui sævissima quæque defendunt, Judaicæ legis exemplo. Ut jam nihil dicam de legis veteris novæque diverso Spiritu, quos tandem ferit illa lex? Nimirum eos qui malignissimo proposito hoc agebant ut homines ab uno vero Deo abducerent, ab eo, inquam, Deo quem et natura docebat, et tot miracula apertè*

testabantur. At Christianæ religionis pleraque non naturâ nobis nota sunt, sed Cœlesti patefactione; et miracula quibus olim ea religio obsignata est, ad summam doctrinæ pertinebant, non ad singula capita quæ in controversiam veniunt.—Hæc autem non eo dico animo, quòd [eos] *judicio eximere velim—qui, mentito religionis nomine, bella excitant, aut imperii statum concutiunt.—Sed facta velim discerni ab opinationibus ut quæ non æquè sunt ἐφ ἡμῖν.** That is to say; "There are those who defend the greatest "severities upon the authority of the Jewish law. "To say nothing here of the different spirit of "the law and the Gospel, I will only ask whom "does that law concern? Plainly, those only who, "out of a malicious and wicked disposition, made "it their business to draw men off from the wor- "ship of the one true God, of that God, I say, "to whom they were directed by the light of "nature; and whose authority had been attested "by so many miracles. But the doctrines of the "Christian religion are many of them not disco- "verable by natural light, but made known to us "by Divine revelation only: and the miracles by "which this religion was heretofore confirmed, "ascertain to us indeed the truth of the Gospel "in general; but they do not determine the sense "of particular doctrines, which may happen to "be controverted among Christians. I speak not "this to exempt those from punishment, who

* Annot. in Matt. 13, 41.

" under pretence of religion raise tumults and " shake the constitution of commonwealths. But " I think actions should be distinguished from " mere opinions, as what are not alike in our own " power." These words are too plain to admit of any illustration, and therefore I proceed to my second proposition; and let it be this,

PROPOSITION II.

Although no violence ought to be offered to CONSCIENCE; *yet all* POSSIBLE CARE *ought to be taken to* RESTRAIN LICENTIOUSNESS; i. e. *to hinder those from separating from the true national worship, who either are under* NO OBLIGATION *from conscience to separate from it, or who, by an ordinary care in the use of proper means to inform and satisfy themselves,* WOULD BE *under no such obligation.*

This proposition needs little proof. For not to hinder a thing when it is, or so far as it is, in our power to hinder it, is to tolerate it: and to tolerate licentiousness, is to tolerate something which will do much hurt under a good establishment, and no service under a bad one. The only justifiable plea for a separation from the national religion is conscience. If therefore those who separate upon a principle of conscience, could certainly be known and distinguished from those who separate either without or against conscience: the rule to the magistrate would be this, to tolerate the one, and to punish the other. But since this is

impossible, some expedient must be called in (if such an expedient can be found) to supply the defect. And this I say, if there be any such kind of restraint as cannot be supposed to affect or hurt a serious conscience, and yet may be supposed to be helpful towards checking the wantonness or wickedness of those, who separate from the national religion upon motives in which conscience hath no concern: the magistrate (where no special reasons to the contrary intervene) hath an undoubted right to make use of such restraint; and that method which best answers both these ends is certainly the best method.

You see now what is the true point which every magistrate ought to have in view. And in short it is this; to discriminate between men of conscience, and men of no conscience, and not to suffer the right of one to be usurped by the other; the liberty due to conscience to be made a cloak for licentiousness. Let no man therefore suffer for conscience, nor let any man of conscience complain if he HAPPENS to suffer in consequence of such a discriminating law. Every man's right is subject to the public good, and every man in his turn has his share of this burthen. The less any man of conscience is exposed to suffering by such a law, the better the law will be: but to find out exactly where this medium lies is very difficult, and may be to us perhaps impracticable. We must endeavour however to come as near it as we can,

and that I may proceed clearly I shall consider the question,

First, with a view to NEGATIVE DISCOURAGEMENTS. And,

Secondly, With regard to PENAL LAWS.

First then, let us consider the question with a view to NEGATIVE DISCOURAGEMENTS. And as to this point I say absolutely and without exception, that *in order to support and maintain the true* NATIONAL RELIGION, *the magistrate hath a right to* EXCLUDE *all those who* DISSENT *or* SEPARATE *from the* NATIONAL RELIGION, *from holding any* PLACE *or* OFFICE *of* TRUST *or* AUTHORITY *under him.* To make good this assertion, two things only are necessary, *viz.* 1. to prove that this method, upon the whole and in the conclusion, tends to the advantage of religion; and, 2. to shew that no particular exceptions lie against the use of it. To each of these I shall speak distinctly. And,

1. Supposing the religion encouraged to be the true religion, the advantage of this method is plain and visible: or if any one doubts, he needs only to go back to what has been observed in the first chapter of this discourse. Our business at present is to handle the argument in a comparative way, *i. e.* to consider what will probably follow in case this method be every where made use of; and see whether those consequences be such as will make it advisable to lay it aside. I have before observed that the great objection against all me-

thods of this kind is, that they stop the way to a reformation where it is wanting: and it is very certain, that something of this sort will attend every method of any kind that is good for any thing. Even instruction, as has been shewn, does not stand quite clear of this evil. For to infuse wrong principles into men's minds must necessarily fill them with prejudices, which always makes it hard, and many times impossible for them to be convinced. So that if it be a sufficient objection against any one method that it does in some degree, or with respect to some persons, tend to hinder a reformation where it is wanting, it must be as sufficient against all methods; and you will be driven at last to this absurdity, even to say, that there ought to be no method of encouraging religion at all.

Some just medium then there must be somewhere to be found. And the way to come at it hath heretofore been shewn to be this, *viz.* to consider what that method is, which, avoiding the evil of a total neglect of religion in the magistrate (which is the greatest evil of all) both tends to support truth where it is, and leaves the way open to a reformation where it is not. I say open, *i. e.* so far open, as that there shall be nothing to hinder on the part of the method, but that, under a tolerable state of the world, truth shall by degrees, as men's prejudices wear off and their passions cool, most generally prevail. It must be

evident to any man of common understanding, that whatever method will have this effect, it must be a reasonable method: for the tendency of such a method in the end and conclusion is, to bring on (as the state and condition of the world will admit of it) a general establishment of true religion by human laws: and how desirable a thing that is, no wise and good man needs to be told. What then is this method? Why here too I may venture to say, that in general I have shewn it you already. For what other method can it be than that, which, leaving every serious man at liberty to act according to his conscience, ministers only a remedy to lust and appetite? Under such liberty as this there will never be wanting men of sense and abilities, who will take pains to beat down popular errors: and if these errors be of small consequence, it will be of as little consequence whether they be reformed. But if they be gross, they will certainly be seen; and the more they are seen, the more they will lose credit: and when once they come to be generally exploded, they will as generally be abandoned. I speak this (as I said just now) presuming mankind to be in a tolerable condition as to morality and a general sense of religion. For when once it comes to that pass, that generally speaking, men have lost all sense of religion, and entirely given themselves up to sensuality and worldly mindedness; the case is more than enough evident, that the best method you can think of

will be without effect. What remedy would be equal to such a desperate disease, it is hard to say: but thus much is certain, that it carries not with it so much as the appearance of a remedy for the magistrate to give up all care of religion, and to leave every man without check or restraint to do what is right in his own eyes.

Thus much then being premised in general, I now apply myself directly to the particular method under consideration. And here in the first place I think it plain beyond contradiction, that the excluding Dissenters from the national religion, from all offices of trust and authority under the supreme magistrate; as it gives a very considerable check (so far as it goes) to licentiousness on the one hand, so it carries with it no oppression of conscience on the other. It must be a very tender conscience indeed, which cannot serve God in peace and quietness, unless it be suffered to rest itself upon a cushion of state. He who is not permitted to reap the fruits of his own labour, skill, and industry, may have just reason to complain that he is oppressed. But it is absurd to talk of oppression, when, *sitting* undisturbed *under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree;* the only matter of complaint is this, that he is not *v. g.* mayor of a corporation, or a lord justice of the realm; that is to say, when he has every thing that he can call his own, and is only denied something, which he has no right to demand.

You will say perhaps, that though here is no oppression upon the consciences of those who are excluded from civil offices; yet here is a bribe offered to purchase the conformity of those who are willing to accept them. I answer that though this is very far from being intended by any good magistrate; yet in effect so it often happens: and I will add withal (if this will please you) the temptation is so great, that, were it possible, it ought not to be laid in the way of the whole, no nor any considerable part of the whole society. If an effective law could be made that all or the major part of those who should conform to the national religion, should get estates; I think that such a law would be unwarrantable: because tending to destroy all integrity among men, it would have almost as bad an effect upon the general state of religion throughout the world, as even persecution itself. But the number of those who can fill or even hope to fill offices of trust, being (as has been said before) exceeding small in comparison to the whole body or society of men; this very much alters the case. True it is that here will still be a temptation to those who are within the reach of it, to sacrifice their consciences to their worldly interest. But this is therefore no objection because the evil is unavoidable. The general good of religion I say requires this method; and if that which contributes to the public advantage, shall be drawn into an occasion of private mischief

to some particular persons, you have had my answer already, that the blame lies upon those who are guilty of the abuse, and that neither the magistrate nor the method has any thing to do in it. Could you separate the trust from the emolument, I am very free to declare, that I would have no such snare laid in the way of any man; but since this is impossible, we must be contented to take things as we find them, and suffer the conveniency and the inconveniency to go together.

But I am now wandering from the point in hand. The question is, what good will this method (supposing it to be every where made use of) in the end and conclusion do to religion? And the objection is, that though it carries with it no oppression upon conscience, yet it offers such a bribe to conscience, as, generally speaking, will prevent those who are within the reach of it, from attempting a reformation, if the magistrate happens to be of another opinion. I own the charge, and am sensible that this circumstance in a greater degree or in a less, will always help to obstruct a reformation. But I have no notion that, if this be the only impediment, it will totally stop the way to a reformation: because I have not observed (and I dare say no man else has found) that the influence of a court and its dependents, could ever so far stupify the senses of a nation, as to cause them not to feel any real hardship, religious or civil. Every magistrate who understands how to govern, will be

careful (so far as is possible) that none be put into offices of trust, but such as will support his own measures of civil administration: and if these be such as no honest man can engage in; it is more than an even chance that he may find knaves enough that will. But what is this to the community? If a post of some thousands a year will stop the mouth of an ambitious courtier, the rest of the world who feel the ill effects of a bad administration will easily understand that things are not as they ought to be: whence else have we heard of general revolts occasioned by unwarrantable encroachments upon the liberties of the subject? The reckoning stands just the same in the affair of religion. Magistrates may prescribe, but the people will judge as they find reason, where there is a free liberty of judging. Whatever they dislike they will certainly complain of; and when once the complaint grows to be general, the magistrate will as certainly find it for his interest to apply a remedy. In short, since experience shews us that confining offices of trust to persons well affected to the government upon a civil account, is very consistent with the removal of civil grievances; nothing hinders us from concluding that the confining such offices to persons well affected upon a religious account, is also very consistent with the removal of religious grievances.

This method then you see comes up exactly to the standard above laid down: *i. e.* it tends to

support truth where it is encouraged, and will not prevent a reformation where it is not encouraged; and by consequence makes way for a general establishment of true religion by human laws. Now pray consider what would be the consequence if (this method being laid aside) offices of trust were bestowed upon all without distinction, whether they complied with the national religion or complied with it not: and I am very much deceived or you will find it to be this, that under such a state of the case you could have no establishment at all. The reason is because persons in authority through the concern which they have in executing, and (in some constitutions) even in making laws, are always such a check upon the magistrate, that unless he secures these to his interest, it will be impossible for him to pursue any one point of government with steadiness and resolution. Every one sees and feels this, in matters of a civil nature. And therefore (as I said just now) it is a maxim in policy which no man finds fault with, to provide so far as may be, that the views both of the magistrate and of those who act as ministers under him, be directed exactly the same way. For otherwise there will be a perpetual clashing and interfering where there ought to be the most perfect harmony: and whatever measures the one pursues, the others will be always ready to obstruct. Suppose then some one way of worship established by the magistrate; *i. e.* suppose (which is the

least that can be supposed) a provision made by the magistrate that the advantage of public instruction shall lie in favour of that one way, which those who act as ministers under him either generally, or (which upon this foot may sometimes happen) universally judge to be wrong. The consequence is plain, that either he will be obliged to consent to repeal those provisional laws, and to make new ones in favour of some other religion; or he must be contented to be served by those who will not like him, *i. e.* by those whom he cannot trust. And let any one judge whether in such a state of the case as this, it would not be far more advisable for the magistrate to throw up all care of religion, and to declare at once that he would make no provision for one way more than for another, than to be continually exposed to those hazards and vexations, which the strugglings of different and contrary factions must necessarily introduce. If you should call the case home to ourselves, and say, that the having a vote to chuse persons to serve in Parliament, is having an interest in the Legislature; and that therefore it will follow in virtue of this reasoning, that even this liberty ought to be taken from Dissenters: my answer is, that I care not how far this reasoning goes, provided it goes but right. They who see this consequence may examine it at leisure: and it seems to me to be much easier to see the consequence, than to prove it to be an unreasonable one. Wherefore,

2. Thus much being said to shew that this method, if every where made use of, would in the end and conclusion turn to the advantage of true religion; I come now to consider what particular exceptions lie against the use of it. And here his Lordship tells us in general that all the members of civil society have * a NATURAL RIGHT, *to the* CAPACITY *of serving their country in* OFFICES *of* TRUST, *till they have forfeited it by professions or practices directly and absolutely inconsistent with their country's safety.* Before we can judge of the truth of this assertion, it will be very requisite to make sense of it, which it scarce is as it now stands. For besides that it is absurd to talk of a natural right to that which results merely from civil institution, and hath no existence out of a commonwealth: it is evident that a capacity to serve one's country in an office of trust, implies divers qualifications which are not the object of right either natural or civil. Thus, for instance, a capacity to serve one's country in the office of a judge, implies the qualifications of wisdom, learning, and integrity: but does any one understand so little language as to say that a man has a right to be either wise, or learned, or upright? Again; what have directly and absolutely to do here? Is it not enough to disqualify a man for an office of trust, that he is guilty of professions or practices inconsistent with his country's safety, whether they be

* Answer to the Committee, p. 184.

so directly or indirectly, absolutely or not absolutely?——But I will not stay to contend about words, provided I can but understand the thing. And therefore, presupposing the natural and moral endowments of men, and all other matters necessary to be presupposed; we will consider the assertion only as it relates to mere differences about religion. You must have observed already that it is not said, that all the members of civil society have a right to the actual holding or enjoying offices of trust. This had been too gross an absurdity. But some right or other was resolved upon; and therefore it is maintained that they have a right to the capacity of enjoying them, or to the capacity of being chosen to hold such offices. We must see then more distinctly what this capacity means, and how this right can be supported. And in order to this it will be proper to shew how the case stands under absolute monarchies, where the supreme legislative and the supreme executive power subsists in one and the same person; for this will lead us clearly to discover how it stands also in mixed governments, where those two branches of the supreme authority are lodged in different hands.

Suppose then in the first place an absolute monarchy. The assertion is, that under such a form of government, all the members of the society have a right to a capacity of serving the magistrate in offices of trust, till they have for-

feited it by professions or practices inconsistent with their country's safety, *i. e.* (for this is what they mean) inconsistent with their country's safety, considered merely as a civil society. By a right to a capacity, here I presume we are not to understand a right to hold such offices if the magistrate thinks fit to bestow them: for this is just such a right as I have to a hundred pounds in your pocket. I have a right to make use of it, if you are disposed to give it me. The meaning therefore is, that every subject hath a right to be considered by the magistrate as a fit person to be employed in offices of trust, if there be no other objection against him besides his opinions in religion: or in other words, that the magistrate hath no right to refuse admitting any man to hold an office of trust, purely because he dissents or separates from the national way of worship. This is the notion, which we are told, is *as old as truth and reason themselves;* a thing which a man may say with great ease to himself as often as he has a mind to it. But to prove it is hard, and (as I conceive) impossible. It is usually said on this occasion, that because such offices are the favours of the magistrate; therefore he may dispose of them upon what conditions or considerations he pleases: which I do not think to be exactly right. They are favours, it is true: but then he is to consider these favours as a trust put into his hands

by the society for the common good: and consequently in the disposal of them he ought always to have a regard to some public end, in which his office is properly concerned. If the magistrate should refuse to make a man lord treasurer only because he has a wide mouth or a Roman nose; this would be an act of injustice both to him and to the public. For what hath the magistrate to do with men's mouths or with their noses? Or of what advantage is it to the public, whether a person in authority hath good features or whether he hath bad ones? But there is justice in debarring a man such an office, because he is disaffected, or because he is a knave. And why? Why because there is all the reason in the world to believe, that he would be false to his trust, and employ that power which he acquires in virtue of that office, not for, but against, the public interest. Now it is but supposing (what our adversaries indeed constantly deny, but which I hope I have sufficiently proved) that it belongs to the magistrate's office to take care of religion; and the work is done at once. For if it be right in the magistrate to exclude a person obnoxious upon a civil account, because the civil good is his care; it must be as right in him to exclude a person obnoxious upon a religious account, because religion is his care. The reason is exactly the same in both cases: and in all cases it will be found true, that whatever it be,

which the magistrate by his office is bound to preserve, he ought to put it in no man's power to hurt or to destroy.

From hence then it is evident that there is no period of time assignable in any well constituted commonwealth, in which it can be said, that every subject has such a right as our adversaries contend for. But if it were possible to assign such a period; this would not help them, unless they could prove this right to be unalienable. Now this is what I would desire to know of these reasoners. Are not all rights, natural or not natural, limitable by the supreme power for reasons which concern the good of the society? Though the thing is plain of itself as flowing from the very notion of a commonwealth, yet I will give an instance or two to explain it. It was an ancient privilege of all freeholders in England who were qualified to give a vote, to be capable of being chosen representatives in Parliament. Nevertheless this privilege has by authority been lately confined to those who have so many hundred pounds a year. Again; it is a natural law that all the products of the creation, in which no man's labour or expence has given him a special property, are common. Yet our game-laws have restrained this right, and limited the use of certain beasts and fowl, to persons of such an estate. Now if all this be justifiable (which no man questions), how comes it to pass that limitations of men's right,

made for the sake or on the account of religion, should be unjustifiable? Is it of less consequence, think you, who serves God in the way he has prescribed, than it is, who is elected to serve the interests of a county or of a corporation? Is it a less evil in itself to dishonour him and his laws, than it is to kill a pheasant or a hare? Is there sense that some should take away the rights of others, for their gain or for their diversion; and none that they should do the same thing for a much better end, the securing virtue and piety? I know the utmost of your answer. The magistrate, say you, has nothing to do with religion. And I say, shew it me. If you can, your notion, I own, will want no farther support; if you cannot, it is impossible it should be supported.

We have hitherto supposed the form of government to be absolutely monarchical. Let us now put the case of a mixed government, and suppose that the supreme legislative, and supreme executive power, are put into different hands. Here the distinction between the actual holding offices of trust, and the capacity to hold them will be still more clear, if it be supposed (which is really the case among ourselves) that the supreme executive power, in whose hands the right of disposing such offices is lodged, is tied down by an express and positive act of the supreme legislative power, not to bestow them but upon persons so or so qualified. For then none will be under a capa-

city of holding such offices, but they who come within the limits prescribed by the legislative power. But though this case sets the meaning of the assertion in a clearer light, it does not in the least affect the issue of the dispute. For the right of the supreme legislative power (where it is not limited by any special fundamental laws), is the same under all forms of government: and consequently if it has a right to deny offices of trust to dissenters from the national religion under an absolute monarchy, it must have a right to bind the supreme executive power to do the same under a limited monarchy. This brings the point quite home to ourselves: and you may now observe, that amidst all the stir that has been made of late about the natural right of every subject to a capacity to hold offices of trust, the notion has nothing else to stand upon but this (as I beg leave to call it) most false presumption, that it is no part of the magistrate's office to take care of religion. And in one word, if this principle can be shewn not to be false, *i. e.* if it can be proved that the office of the magistrate in its original design and institution relates to mere civil good, exclusive of the ends of religion; I will give up all the rest without any farther controversy. But whilst the foundation remains unshaken, the superstructure, I think, cannot fail: and therefore here I shall leave the matter to rest, till some new and better reasons be offered on the other side. In the mean while, if

any one has a mind to see more concerning the lawfulness and necessity of this method, considered with a particular view to our own constitution, I must recommend him to the learned Dean of Chichester's Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts, where the case is resolved with so much true judgment, that it would be an inexcusable vanity in me to pretend to add any thing to it by way of improvement.

Having now considered the question as it relates to NEGATIVE DISCOURAGEMENTS; I proceed to consider it,

Secondly, with regard to PENAL LAWS: and my opinion is that all laws of this sort which inflict either death, or torture, or banishment, or imprisonment, ought in this case to be laid aside. Because (setting aside other reasons which are peculiar to some, there is this reason common to them all, *viz.* that) the severity of the laws being such, as considering the weakness of flesh and blood, very few will be able to resist; the use of them must contradict the first rule, that NO VIOLENCE *ought to be offered to* CONSCIENCE; and they are not methods of discrimination, but of destruction. But then as to PECUNIARY MULCTS I do not think that they ought wholly and absolutely to be discarded: because they are capable of being so tempered as to the degree and measure of them, that whilst they offer no violence to conscience, they shall yet very much help to restrain licen-

tiousness; which (as has been shewn) is the true medium that the magistrate ought to aim at. Under this head then I lay down the following position, *viz.* that SUCH PECUNIARY MULCTS *as will be both the* TRIAL *and the* INDULGENCE *of the* SINCERITY *of men*, i. e. *such as will prevail upon no serious and sober person, to* JOIN *in the* NATIONAL *way of worship* AGAINST *his* CONSCIENCE; *and at the same time will, in a greater degree, or in a less, be sufficient to* HINDER *those from* SEPARATING, *whom* NO REAL SCRUPLE *of conscience* OBLIGES *so to do; may* LAWFULLY *be imposed by the* CIVIL MAGISTRATE. How pecuniary mulcts may be thus moderated, and of what service they would be to religion, shall in the first place be explained: and then (as in the preceding case) I shall endeavour to justify the use of them, from such particular exceptions as may seem to lie against it.

1. Then; that such a temper with respect to pecuniary mulcts, as I am now speaking of, may be found, must be visible to any man of ordinary apprehension. For though it be impossible to assign that method, which, saving harmless all good men, shall be sufficient to controul all bad ones: yet it is very easy to discern that there may be a method which shall effectually curb the passions of many, whilst at the same time it leaves a just liberty to all. There was a law once in force among ourselves by which it was provided, that every one who absented himself from his parish

church should pay twelve-pence a Sunday. This law as it stood might be liable to many exceptions, and this was certainly a very great one, that it had no regard to the diversity of men's circumstances, which is many times so great, that one shall be oppressed by paying a sum, which another will hardly feel. What is twelve-pence a Sunday to a gentleman of many thousands a year? And what is it not to the poor wretch who cannot earn a penny more than is necessary to buy bread for himself and family? But let us suppose a law made to this or some such effect, that every person who does not think fit to conform to the national religion, should be obliged to enter his name in some public register; and that so many pounds as he is rated to the king, so many sixpences (or any other sum you like better) he should pay yearly as a tribute for his liberty. Let this I say be supposed, or any other law of the same sort, and I will then ask what kind of conscience that must be which will permit a man to act against his own sense and conviction, rather than to pay the fortieth part of what he is worth? Plainly so bad a one as not to be worth the owning, and therefore not worth the magistrate's regarding; who will have little to do if he must never make a law, till he can be sure that it will minister no occasion of wickedness to covetous and worldly-minded men. But if a man of common honesty would chuse to give up so small a portion of his sub-

stance, rather than offend his conscience; a man of common sense and discretion would not wantonly throw it away, which yet would be the case of those who should chuse to part with it, when there is a possibility of keeping that and a good conscience together.

This method might be (as indeed it ought to be) made to extend to all the members of the society in general; to the low as well as to the high; to the poor as well as to the rich. As gentlemen should be taxed according to their estates; so tradesmen (as it is usual in other cases) should be taxed according to their stocks, and labourers and servants according to their wages: only with respect to the two last sort, it might be reasonable perhaps somewhat to lower the proportion. To say the truth, there may be other rules of adjusting the proportion thought of, which may answer the purpose much better than that which I have mentioned. The burden should always be heavy enough to be felt; but never so heavy as to crush or overwhelm. But I do not here aim at the exactness of a lawgiver who is going to put the method in execution: I am only endeavouring to give the reader a general idea of the practicableness of it. And this I am persuaded that however the licentious, who are impatient of contradiction, may dislike it, no serious and good man will find any just reason to complain. A man has a mind, we will say, to leave his parish church and go to a

conventicle. The law allows it him, paying only such a composition for his liberty. Will not this (supposing him to make a conscience of what he does) put him upon considering whether the reasons which lead him to separate, be of sufficient weight to balance the inconveniency which attends upon a separation? It is plain it will. Well; let him consider, and the more the better. For where truth is concerned, the more a man considers (supposing his sense to be equal to his honesty) the better he will like it. Now if this happens to be the case, *i. e.* if upon mature deliberation the man sees reason to be reconciled to the established religion; there is this good obtained, that a wavering mind is confirmed in a good way. But if it happens otherwise, there will be no harm done on the other side; it being supposed that the inconveniency which attends upon a separation, is not so great as to lead any man of common honesty to conform against his will. The consequence then of such a method would be plainly this, that all those loose and floating Christians, who understand and consider little, but mean well; and without any formed or settled principle of conscience, are (like so many motes and straws) swept in by the mere eddy of a faction; that these, I say, would be kept fast within the bosom of the church, and the separation confined, in a good degree, (where it ought to be confined, and where the law intends it should be confined,) to consciences truly scru-

pulous; *i. e.* to those who resort to conventicles, not merely because it is their pleasure, but because they have reasons weighty to themselves for so doing. The number of this latter sort, some, I know, are wont to magnify. But, so far as ever I could observe, they are by far the least among Dissenters of all sorts and denominations. "I "have no objection (say they) against the Church "of England. It is a safe and good way for "ought I know. But I like the meetings better; "and why may not I make use of that liberty "which the law allows me?" Seldom shall you meet with a better excuse for separation than this, among the common sort. And pray tell me seriously; can you believe that if a man in good circumstances were obliged to pay as much for his scruples, as it would cost him to keep a horse, or to defray the charges of an ordinary poor's-rate: and a labourer or a servant no more than what he can afford to spend yearly at foot-ball matches, wakes, and such like idle diversions: can you believe, I say, were this the case, that there would be so many, who would think it worth the while to dispute, whether in receiving the Holy Sacrament, a man ought to kneel or to stand; whether the minister when he officiates should wear a white garment or a black one; or whether it is best to read his prayers and sermon, or to say them by heart? Assure yourself that these and such like differences would (if not wholly cease)

at least give but little disturbance. For whatever there be in these things, at which weak men may sometimes stumble, it must be plain to any man of common observation, that when any considerable party is formed upon such distinctions, it must owe its support in a great measure to the giddiness of the multitude; who having no ballast within, nor any check from without, are easily led this way or that way, *by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

You will object perhaps that I am all this while talking against experience: for that Dissenters do now pay as much, perhaps, as, according to my proposal, it is reasonable and fitting for them to pay, *i. e.* as much as can be spared without oppression. All public societies must be supported at public charges: and is it nothing to provide houses for the public worship of God, and a maintenance for their congregational teachers? I answer; that how great soever these expenses may be supposed to be, thus much is obvious and undeniable, that they lie heaviest where the weight of them is least felt, *i. e.* upon the wealthiest of the party who have more money (though perhaps not always more conscience) than their followers. If it be supposed that these make up a tenth part of the whole body; it will be no wide calculation if we say that of the nine parts remaining, there is ordinarily one half that pays nothing, and another next to nothing. What may a congregation

consisting of two hundred souls, be supposed to raise yearly for the maintenance of its pastor? Why if we take one with another, we shall be bountiful, I suppose, if we allow a hundred pounds. Admit then that out of these two hundred, there are twenty who pay at the rate of four pounds a year, and hn see how much will remain to be divided among the rest. But not to pretend to any exact computation, (which it may be impossible to come at) I would only put this question to any reasonable man; *viz.* whether amidst all the bustle that is made about greater purity of worship among the Dissenters, there are not multitudes of them who if they would consider the matter with any tolerable care, would find the difference to be so inconsiderable that they would make it their choice rather to conform, than to put themselves to any sensible inconveniency for the sake of their liberty. Whatever reasons there are (and many there are) to persuade a man to believe this; they are so many arguments to shew the usefulness of this method, which will be either more or less effectual, in proportion as the number of such men is either lesser or greater. Nor let it be asked what advantage will the church receive by the addition of such indifferent members to her communion: for they are supposed to be indifferent, not with respect to religion or christianity in general, but with respect to the diversity which there is between the two ways of worship;

which indifferency will not in the least hurt them as Christians, though it alters their measures as to conformity or non-conformity. If a man upon reasons which he hath never well considered, but which he supposes or believes to have weight, goes to a meeting: he will be the better Christian if he comes to church, because upon consideration he finds that they have none. And if another who, believing one way to be as good as another, (which is the case of many), separates only to please his fancy, to indulge his curiosity, because he has been bred up that way, or through any other little considerations which may be sufficient to cast the balance when the mind is equally poised on both sides; it will not be said I hope that his conformity makes him ever the worse. Nor, finally, when you have supposed the worst that can be supposed; can it be pretended that it is of no consequence, to put an end to outward differences and distinctions; which by occasioning a breach of charity, causes men, whilst they are contending about shadows, to lose the substance of religion and godliness.

Well then; let it be so, you will say, that this method tends to the advancement of true religion, where true religion happens to be encouraged. Still it is allowed that the same method ought to be pursued where error is encouraged; and pray see what will be the consequence then. Be not disheartened; the consequence will not hurt you.

That which this method directly proposes is this; that, so far as is possible, none should separate from the religion of their country, but those who upon sober and serious reflection with themselves, think it their duty so to do: which rule if it were every where observed as well under bad establishments, as under good ones, the world would be considerably the better for it. To consider seriously, and to judge warily, are things which can never hurt the truth; but the want of them will: and though it is certain that some present inconveniencies may arise from the use of this method, in those countries where error is established, (which as I said before, is the case of every method which hath any virtue or efficacy) yet that these are such as will stop the way to a reformation, or any thing like it, is what I utterly deny. Let us consider this matter a little carefully. The competition at present lies only between moderate, pecuniary mulcts, and an absolute indulgence. To find out the true difference, therefore, due instruction ought alike to be supposed on both sides. Now this I say; if the whole world were to agree in the use of such pecuniary mulcts, all who are capable to receive the benefit of instruction, and are not lost to all sense of religion, would (for ought that there is in this method to hinder) as to all material points at least, worship God in that one way wherein he ought to be worshipped. For why? The evidence of truth is by instruction supposed to be made

plain to the understanding; and here is nothing to prevent the judgment and conscience from going together. Where truth is encouraged, there the advantages of this world will lie on the side of conscience; and even where it is discouraged, there is no danger to be apprehended; because the discouragement is supposed not to be so great as to lay any force upon conscience. All that can be said is; that weak men who cannot judge, careless men who will not judge, and wicked men who either will not judge, or will not act according to what they judge, will generally fall in with the national religion whatever it be. But this can be no objection: for as to careless and wicked men, (whilst they are such) they have no pretence to be reckoned in the account. As they profess the national religion merely because it is the national religion: so if there were no national religion, they would profess none. Either way they are men (properly speaking) of no religion: and when men have no religion, their presence cannot add to, nor their absence diminish from, the number of religious men. And as to the weak and injudicious, it is my opinion that in general they will be as safe at least under the direction of the magistrate, as they would be under the influence of their own humours and fancies, and the practices of those artful designing men, who, for vile and mercenary ends, may be disposed to beguile and seduce them. But with respect to this sort of men,

there is one thing more to be said, which is, that since the weak are always governed by the strong, and men of little sense the property (as it were) of those who have much; to secure the former, there is no need of any thing more than to take care of the latter, who, when once they come to feel the necessity of a reformation, will draw the rest after them without much difficulty.

I should hope that by this time enough has been said to convince any reasonable man of the usefulness of this method. What remains is,

2. To consider what particular exceptions lie against it. There are but two that I can think to be of weight sufficient to deserve the reader's attention: these therefore, and these only, I shall distinctly speak to.

EXCEPTION I.

It may be said then, that *this method proposes that* PECUNIARY MULCTS *be imposed upon those who* SEPARATE *from the* NATIONAL *religion upon some* REAL SCRUPLE *of* CONSCIENCE. *But such men are guilty of* NO FAULT, *and where there is* NO FAULT, *even the lowest degree of* PUNISHMENT *is unjust.*

This reason was of great weight with Mr. Locke, and deserves to be considered. I answer, therefore,

1. By admitting what the objection supposes, *viz.* that those who separate from the true national religion honestly and with a good conscience, are

guilty of no fault. Here is none against God, because they are supposed to act according to their consciences, after due care to inform themselves; here is none against the magistrate, who hath no authority to bind men against their consciences. It is not essential to the notion of an establishment, that the magistrate even makes a law, commanding his subjects to worship God in one particular way. It is enough that he shews what way he approves, and makes a public provision for its defence and security above all others. But if there were such a law made, the meaning of it could be only to enjoin all to comply with it who can; which (as I said before) implies an exception to those who cannot. Now where there is a liberty granted, there can certainly be no fault in making use of that liberty. Wherefore,

2. The point comes to this, *viz.* whether in order to justify the magistrate in levying pecuniary mulcts, it be always necessary to suppose a fault; and to me it is very evident that it is not. The case is undeniably plain, 1. with respect to all such laws as are termed purely penal; *i. e.* with respect to those laws where the intention of the legislator is equally answered, whether you submit to the law, or pay the penalty. If the magistrate should make a law that every man of such an estate that would not serve in the war, should pay ten pounds: would you say that he who should chuse to pay the ten pounds would be

guilty of a fault? Certainly not. And the reason is plain, *viz.* because by the very nature of the law, it appears that the magistrate leaves him at liberty to do either the one or the other; and consequently the will of the magistrate will either way be equally obeyed. This comes up exactly to the case in hand. The magistrate orders, we will say, that every one of such circumstances who will not go to church, shall pay twenty shillings. A man pays the twenty shillings and goes to a meeting. Where is the fault? Why no where; because here is the same liberty given as before. But what justice, you will ask, is there in this latter case? Why just as much as there is in the former. The reasons of the law are not the same in both cases, but they are sufficient in both. In the one case, the magistrate demands money to purchase so much power to the government, which every subject in proportion to the interest he has in it, is bound to support. In the other, money is demanded, to set a guard about a liberty, which though every man has a right to make use of, yet no man has or can have a right to abuse. The case is also clear, 2. with respect to ALL laws made for the public civil good, which happen to interfere with the consciences of particular persons. Instead of a discretionary law, let us suppose the magistrate to issue out a peremptory edict, commanding such and so many of his subjects to go to war, upon pain of banishment or

confiscation of goods. Some of them, believing in their consciences the war to be unjust, refuse to go. I ask now, are these persons guilty of a fault, or are they not? It is not all material to inquire here, whether the war be really just or unjust; nor yet whether this be a case in which private persons have a right to judge. We will suppose, if you please, both that they have no right to judge, and that they judge wrong: still they are supposed to act according to the best of their knowledge; they think they ought to judge, and according to the truest judgment they can make, they are persuaded that by obeying the magistrate, they should offend God. What say you? Guilty or not guilty? Not guilty, say I. For wherever there is a fault, there must be some law transgressed. And what is a law? Not surely a mere command. For you may command me to run my head against a wall: but this is no law; because you have no authority to command it. A law then is a command with authority: and this is what Bishop Sanderson means when he defines it, *regula agendi subdito a superiore* POTESTATEM HABENTE *imposita*. The law then being founded in authority, where the authority ends, the law must end too: and the authority of man must ever have an end when it comes to stand in competition with the authority of God. It remains then that here is an edict, which, considered merely as an edict or command, reaches indeed to

all: but which as a law or authoritative command, reaches to those only who can in conscience comply with it. Hath now the magistrate a right to execute the penalty upon those who refuse to comply, or hath he not? Doubtless you will say he has; because otherwise there will be an end of all government. But whoever says this, acknowledgeth thereby that there may be a right to inflict penalties upon those who are guilty of no fault: or in other words, that in order to justify the magistrate in inflicting penalties, a fault is not always necessary to be supposed. Wherefore,

3. In order to get quite clear of the objection, we have only to consider, whether the reason which justifies the magistrate in this case, will not justify him also in the case before us; of which I think there is little room to doubt or deliberate. For the reason which justifies the magistrate in enforcing laws made for the public civil good by penal sanctions, is (as I before said) a presumption that every member of the society has in these cases obliged himself either to obey the law, or to submit to the penalty: and there is certainly as much a right of presumption in the one case, as there is in the other. The magistrate must always be understood to have a right to consider men as consenting to every thing, to which wise and reasonable men ought to consent, for the good of the whole: and what reasonable man can refuse to consent to put himself to a small inconveniency,

if thereby he may in any good degree be instrumental in promoting the honour of God, and the everlasting interest of his fellow creatures? That wise and reasonable men should consent to the use of oppressive methods to support religion, cannot be supposed for reasons that have before been mentioned. But that they should have consented to the use of such a method as can be no heavy burthen upon any that mean honestly, is what may, yea, what must, be supposed for reasons which I hope I need not mention, and which it would be even a shame in any man to dispute. A variety of instances are to be given, in which wise and good men think it right to oblige themselves to pay certain yearly sums for the promoting religion and piety. And though in many cases it would be a great hardship, if, what a man is disposed charitably to give, should be demanded of him by law: yet thus much is certain, that, since it is on all hands admitted that something of this sort ought to be done, every man must be supposed to consent that the magistrate should do so much as he finds reasonable and fitting to be done, in a public way. If there were a law that as the rich in every parish are bound to provide their poor with food and raiment, so they should be obliged to provide them with suitable instruction also; I think it would be the most righteous law in the world. That which justifies it is this, that though men's charity neither ought to be, nor indeed can

be, determined by law; yet that the magistrate hath always such a right over the purses of his subjects, as will enable him to assign a reasonable share or proportion of their substance, to serve any useful end of society, of which religion has been shewn to be one. Now pray tell me; what is paying a moderate sum as a composition for liberty to separate from the true national religion, when through the unavoidable errors of conscience we are unable to comply with it, more than paying so much money for the service of religion? It is doubtless in the main and upon the whole for the good of religion, that every man should be suffered to worship God in that way, in which he thinks he ought to be worshipped. This liberty therefore is allowed you. But that men should separate from the true way of worship when their consciences lay them under no necessity of doing it, is not for the good of religion: this therefore is a liberty which neither is, nor ought to be allowed. What then do we expect? Why that YOU, who unhappily are the occasion of obliging the magistrate to grant a liberty for the good of religion, may YOURSELVES (so far as may be, and at a very moderate expence) become the instruments of preventing this liberty from being abused to the hurt of religion. Do you agree to it, or do you not? If you do, I have the thing I want; but if you do not, you may pretend to conscience as much as you please:

but, in plain terms, it is a very shrewd sign that you have none.

Thus at last we are (and very safely I hope) got through the first difficulty, of which, if those who propose it, had considered more, there would have been no need to have said so much. The only thing which puzzles the question is the equivocal use of the words *fault* and *punishment*; which in some sense are always relative the one to the other, and in some sense not. If by a fault you understand something which is strictly criminal, *i. e.* morally evil with respect to some law human or divine; it is plain from the instances above, that punishment doth not necessarily presuppose a fault. But if by a fault you mean merely the transgression of a command exclusive of the morality and immorality of it, then punishment will imply a fault. For men are never said to be punished but for doing something which they are forbidden to do, or for not doing something which they are commanded to do. If a king levies money upon his subjects for the public use: this is called a tax or tribute, but never a penalty. The reason is because here is no previous law for the transgression of which such money is demanded. But if he makes a law commanding them to mend the highways, to repair public buildings and the like, and fixes a sum to be raised upon defaulters; this is called a penalty, and not a tax or tribute, for a contrary reason. The case

of discretionary laws may perhaps stand as an exception to this general rule. For (as in the instance before-mentioned) though a law enjoining that those who will not serve in the war shall pay ten pounds, does not properly imply a command to serve in the war; yet I conceive that the money levied upon those who should refuse to serve, would (through the affinity of the thing) be termed a penalty. Nevertheless, since this is of the same nature with those pecuniary mulcts, which might be laid upon Dissenters as a composition for their liberty, they ought rather, I think, to be called both by the same name. Strictly speaking, they are neither of them penalties; nor should I therefore have mentioned these pecuniary mulcts under the head of penal laws, but that I knew not where so conveniently to place them. But if any one will say that they are penalties, I shall not contend, provided he does not make it the ground of an argument; nor raise such conclusions upon the mere force of a word, as (I have shewn I hope) are not to be justified. To proceed then to the next exception.

EXCEPTION II.

It may be objected farther; that *the granting to the* magistrate *such a power as I now contend for, is putting a power into his hands which will be very apt to be abused, and may be attended with bad consequences. For the power contended for, is not a*

power to impose PECUNIARY MULCTS *of* ANY *sort, but a power to impose* MODERATE *pecuniary mulcts* ONLY. *Now the magistrate (to whose discretion this must be left) may either mistake in judging, what pecuniary mulcts* ARE *moderate; or through avarice and cruelty may be led, under the pretext of imposing* MODERATE *pecuniary mulcts, to levy* EXORBITANT FINES.

The general answer to this objection is, that it concludes with equal strength against trusting the magistrate with any discretionary power at all.

Yet it is plain that all magistrates have, and in many cases must have, a discretionary power; from which, ordinarily, we find no ill effects, nor can find any but where the magistrate pays no regard to the rules of reason, justice and equity. But more particularly,

1. As to the difficulty of judging what pecuniary mulcts are moderate; it is here as it is in most other cases, hard to fix upon the indivisible point where moderate courses end, and extravagant ones begin: yet there can be no considerable deviation on either side, which will not fall under the notice of common sense. It is hard to determine precisely how much liquor a man may drink consistently with the rules of sobriety. Yet it would be ridiculous to propose it as a matter of difficulty, how to distinguish a temperate man from a sot. In the present case, if a Dissenter from the national religion were fined only the parings of his nails, every one would judge it to be no fine at all.

On the other hand, if he had a mulct set upon him to the value of his whole estate, every one would as readily determine it to be immoderate. The temper lies somewhere between both extremes; which though no man can define to a mathematical exactness, yet a man of ordinary discretion, from a general knowledge and observation of mankind, will be able to discover so far as is useful. But,

2. What if the magistrate wilfully, and against all reason, takes occasion from hence to oppress and harass Dissenters? I answer, 1. that there is little danger to be apprehended from this quarter, in mixed or popular governments, where the executive power is tied down by special rules, and the people are governed by no laws, but such as are of their own making. It were as easy a matter for the Parliament in Great Britain, or for the States in Holland, to proportion the sum that every Dissenter shall pay for his liberty, as it is to determine how much the subject shall be assessed to the public revenue. And although in difficult and distracted times, when party quarrels run high, and men have lost their temper, such inconveniencies might arise, as would make it reasonable to wish that such measures, for a season, might be forborn: yet upon the whole, and in the ordinary course of things, I see no reason to apprehend that the whole body of any nation should be disposed to act with less wisdom and integrity here,

than in other matters of State, which are and must be left to their discretion. 2. Even in absolute, unlimited governments, you have the same remedy here, that you have in all other public grievances. If we go to the patrons of the popular scheme, we shall find them admitting through necessity a discretionary power, not less dangerous to civil government, than this is conceived to be to religion. They tell us that though small grievances are to be borne, yet when the supreme power so far abuses his trust as to endanger the safety of the commonwealth, the people have a right to use force to redress themselves. Now if it should be asked (as it usually is on this occasion) who are to judge when grievances are consistent, or not consistent, with the safety of the commonwealth; their answer must be, the people. But may not the people be jealous beyond reason, and apprehend dangers where there are really none? Or may not they grow factious and tumultuous, and resolve right or wrong either to have no government, or to change hands? Clear your own scheme from this difficulty, and you will at the same time clear mine. When any considerable number of men are called upon by united counsels, to determine measures for the common good; it is generally to be presumed that they will act discreetly and wisely. This is the fundamental rule, upon which all popular schemes of government subsist. Now if you have occasion for this maxim, pray take it

and welcome. But be so just as to allow me to make use of it in my turn: for it is certain that it will serve us both alike, or it will serve neither of us.

And now I have likewise done with exceptions: for it would be endless to pursue all that may be found in the writers on the side of toleration; and needless, because they do not affect the scheme I propose to be considered, but other methods which they had in view. To give an instance of this, Mr. Locke takes pains to expose the absurdity of punishing Dissenters *to make them consider*. The substance of what he says is, that "in truth Dissenters are punished *because they are* "*Dissenters*, and not *to make them consider*. That "to punish them *to make them consider* is absurd "and unjust, because *some* may have considered "*already*, and it is impossible to distinguish *these*, "from those who have *not* considered, &c."* All which reasons, and a hundred more such, will (so far at least as I am concerned in them) admit of a very plain and short answer, *viz.* by saying (as the truth indeed is) that Dissenters are punished (if you will have it to be a punishment) neither *because they are Dissenters*, (*i. e.* not merely because they are Dissenters) nor yet *to make them* (*i. e.* those who are punished) *consider*. They are not punished merely because they are Dissenters: because it is supposed that, if it could certainly be

* Second Letter for Toleration.

known aforehand that they are sincere Dissenters, they would not be punished. Nor are they punished *to make them consider:* because these penalties being intended as a test whereby to distinguish the sincere from the insincere; it is presumed that those who submit to these penalties are sincere, *i. e.* have considered already. But why then are they punished? Why, 1. they are considered as Dissenters. This is the *causa sine quâ non;* or the circumstance without which these penalties would not be laid upon them. But then, 2. the proper, immediate reason why these penalties are laid upon them is, because they are men capable of imposing upon the magistrate, by pretending scruples of conscience where there are none, or where under a due care there would be none, and because their submitting to these penalties hath the nature of an evidence to shew, that they do not impose upon him. Is there sense I pray, in this, or is there none? If you say there is none, I shall desire to be told the reason why. Of the same stamp with this, is another objection frequently urged, both by him and by other writers, *viz.* that those who plead for moderate penalties, will in consequence of their principles be obliged to have recourse to great ones, IF these moderate ones WILL NOT DO. Will not do what? Why bring over all Dissenters (I suppose) to the national religion; or so many at least as the magistrate has a mind should come over. But,

this is not what this method proposes. On the contrary, it grants a liberty for all those to separate, who separate honestly, and upon a principle of conscience; and only provides (so far as human affairs will permit) a remedy against licentiousness: and this is what such moderate penalties must be supposed ALWAYS TO DO. It follows then from these principles, that the magistrate ought NEVER to proceed to violent measures. Rather he should conclude, that if the national religion, notwithstanding it hath all the weight of public instruction on its side; notwithstanding that none are admitted to civil offices, or to any interest in the government, but those who profess the national religion; and notwithstanding that all who separate themselves from the national religion, are subjected to pecuniary mulcts or impositions, so far as is consistent with liberty of conscience: if, I say, under all these advantages the magistrate finds that the national religion cannot be supported, he will have reason to conclude that it ought not to be supported, *i. e.* that it is not a true but a false religion, which stands in need of being reformed.

This is what I have to offer to justify the lawfulness of PECUNIARY MULCTS. If any, setting these aside, had rather stop at NEGATIVE DISCOURAGEMENTS; I have only this to say, that PECUNIARY MULCTS have a more general influence, and (supposing them to be proportioned as they ought to

be) will be attended with no worse consequences. This however I am very free to acknowledge: that if negative discouragements (in their full latitude) were carefully applied, there would be the less need of any farther provision. For nothing can render any body of Dissenters (where truth is encouraged) considerable, but such an interest in the government as makes it worth the while for designing politicians (who have ends in view separate from the common good) to court their favour, by the hopes of more and greater privileges. Wherever there is a discontented faction, statesmen will never want a party at their devotion.—But with these I will have nothing to do. Still it is something to do good to a few: and how inconsiderable soever the body of Dissenters might be supposed to be upon this foot, considered as a party against the church; yet considered as men in error, they should not be beneath the magistrate's care, who is to look upon himself as much a father to the meanest of his subjects, as he is to the greatest. And this is that which above all things recommends the use of pecuniary mulcts; *viz.* that they administer a remedy where a remedy is most wanted, *i. e.* to the low part of mankind, who for want of judgment being the most open to receive wrong impressions, and the most greedy of novelties, are therefore always the persons among whom seducers of all sorts reap the most plentiful harvest. I would not be misunderstood in what I

say. I am not dictating to my superiors, nor taxing them with remissness, on account of the indulgence allowed to those who differ from us: I am only (with all due submission to better judgments) laying down what appears to me to be fitting and reasonable upon a general view of the case; leaving it to those whom it concerns, to consider how it suits with our own particular circumstances. It is certain in this, as well as in all other cases, that a right does not infer an obligation to execute that right. Justice is best exercised when it is directed by prudence and discretion: and since it is impossible that the magistrate should provide for religion, without securing that power by which he is enabled to provide for it; it is plain that no measures (however otherwise justifiable) are to be taken, which by any unhappy situation of affairs, appear to be inconsistent with the public safety. But barring all special reasons, the method, I say, is just and equitable; in which, if I am right, the Dissenters ought not to take it amiss that they are told of it; who may learn from hence (what of late they have shewn themselves more unwilling to acknowledge than becomes them) how much they are indebted to the clemency of the government under which they live, and how much it is their duty rather to be thankful for what they have, than to be always murmuring and complaining because they have not more.

In conjunction with this, and with the other

ways and means above mentioned, there is one more of another kind, which (by the way) it may not be amiss to take notice of; and that is this. What if all those who have a mind to separate from the national religion, should, in order to obtain their liberty, be obliged to declare solemnly upon oath, "that according to the best of their "judgments they have considered the matter with "sufficient care, and that it is against their con- "sciences to conform: that they will, at all times "hereafter, use their honest endeavours to satisfy "their consciences; and, setting aside all secular "or worldly considerations, be ready to comply "with the national religion, as soon as ever they "shall be convinced, that it is lawful for them so "to do?" Would not this put many Dissenters to a stand? Most certainly. For though there may be some who mistake mere humour and fancy, for conscience; and others who have real scruples, which (as to themselves) may be sufficient to justify the plea of conscience: yet doubtless there are others (and those not a few) who, having sense enough to see that there is nothing of any great moment to be objected against our communion, have also so much honesty, that, were it thus put home upon them, whether they really believe that by conforming they should be guilty of a sin before God, they would not say it. That which leads many honest well meaning persons to dissent from the established religion is certainly, not that

they believe they should not do a good thing by coming to church, but because they think that by going to a meeting they do a better. Now such as these, it is plain, would all be secured by this expedient: for how great soever the supposed advantage of one way of worship above another may be; no man can be so absurd as to believe, that it ought to be purchased at the expence of his integrity, or that the sin of perjury will not do him much more harm, than any such supposed advantage will do him good. Some perhaps may think, that there is little need at this time of day, to multiply the use of oaths: and it is readily owned that it is a great fault in legislators to require oaths, where there are not very weighty reasons to justify it. But I am really of opinion that the use of an oath in this case would be liable to fewer exceptions, than it is in most others, where oaths are commonly practised. For what can be more reasonable, than that in an affair where religion and conscience only are, or only ought to be, concerned, the strongest security should be required that religion and conscience can give? The great objection against the use of oaths is, that they are the occasion of leading men into perjury; and so indeed they too often prove, when worldly interest stands on the wrong side. But will the Dissenters say, or will any one else say it for them, that they separate to serve their worldly interest? If they do, they have no right

to be tolerated: and if they do not, there will be no sort of decency in complaining if such an oath should be required; for this implies no greater hardship than the making themselves judges of themselves. It is setting conscience against pretences to conscience; or, in other words, appealing to conscience to find out the true decision and determinations of conscience.

To conclude then; the method which I propose has now been laid before you in all its general parts: and with respect to each of them it has been shewn, that whilst they help to restrain licentiousness on the one hand, they lay no real burden upon conscience on the other. Now what is true of every part, is also true of the whole put together: each of them indeed has its weight; and therefore the united force of all, must be be greater than the separate force of any. This will be so much the more for the advantage of true religion, in those places where truth is encouraged. And though for the same reason it must be confessed, that it will be so much the more for its disadvantage, in those places where error is established in the room of truth; yet this is a disadvantage which will grow less, in proportion as the number of those who are brought over to the truths grows greater: which, supposing the use of instruction, (which must be supposed in every method) will always daily increase, where neither oppression, nor any other

unjustifiable causes intervene to hinder. If no greater restraint than what I have pleaded for, had ever been made use of in Popish countries; we may venture to say, without the help of a prophetic spirit, that there had been an end of Popery (*i. e.* of all the gross errors of Popery) before this time. And even now if you could remove that force by which men are chained down to her communion, as it were, against their wills; that general corruption and depravity of manners among the more sensible part of them, (to the introducing which force hath been very greatly instrumental:) if, I say, you could remove these obstacles, it would be morally impossible that Protestantism, which is in the main a very reasonable religion, should not get ground, and at length for the most part prevail. Much time indeed must be allowed for the conquering inveterate prejudices; and more perhaps will be necessary under the use of this method, than under the method of those who are for entirely separating religion from the conveniencies and inconveniencies of this world. But here lies the great difference. One method is more slow; the other less sure. One is calculated for a continuance; the other in a little time will grow good for nothing: one tends to throw the whole weight of human authority on the side of true religion; the other divests it of all aid from human authority, and leaves as much room for appetite and passion to operate, as for reason and

conscience. There needs no great sagacity to find out which of these two methods is the best: and this I say, that whatever present advantages might be felt from an absolute indulgence, or from putting truth and error upon the same foot as to all civil privileges, in some corners of the world; magistrates would soon see the necessity of coming back to some order again, to prevent that decay of religion and piety which would every where ensue.

There may perhaps be other causes besides that which I have mentioned, which contribute towards preventing a reformation in Popish countries, with which this method is not particularly concerned. Of this sort are the intrigues of princes and politicians, who turn religion into a tool of state. Of this sort too are the avarice and tenaciousness of certain religious orders of men, who have engrossed more of the public wealth than falls to their share; and know not how to reform, because they know not how to refund. This latter cause made a reformation so difficult among ourselves; that nothing but the resolution of a prince pushed on by strong passions could, so soon at least, have brought it to pass. And perhaps it may be no untrue observation, if I say, that the ill use that was made of the revenues of the church on that occasion, has had no mean share in deterring other nations from following our example. But let but these abuses first be rectified; let but magistrates

once seriously set themselves to promote what they think to be truth and righteousness; let but churchmen have every where such a maintenance as is convenient for them, *i. e.* such a maintenance as places them beneath the envy of great men, and yet above the scorn and contempt of those whom they are to influence by their example and authority, as well as by their instruction; and let them but be secure, that when you design to reform you do not mean to plunder: let, I say, but these great points be taken care of, and you will not find national reformations to be such hard things. Or if you do, it must then be said, that mankind are most untractable creatures; that there is little or no sense of religion or regard to God in the world: and whether, in this state of the case, more good might be expected by giving up every man wholly to himself, let any reasonable person judge. Rather should we conclude in such a case, that human means (which have their certain period, beyond which they cannot go) are now at an end; and therefore, that, for what is farther necessary, our business is humbly to depend upon the good providence of God, who has means in his hands which we know not of; which he will certainly make use of, when he sees it to be convenient.

I shall detain the reader no longer than whilst I mention one case more, which is,

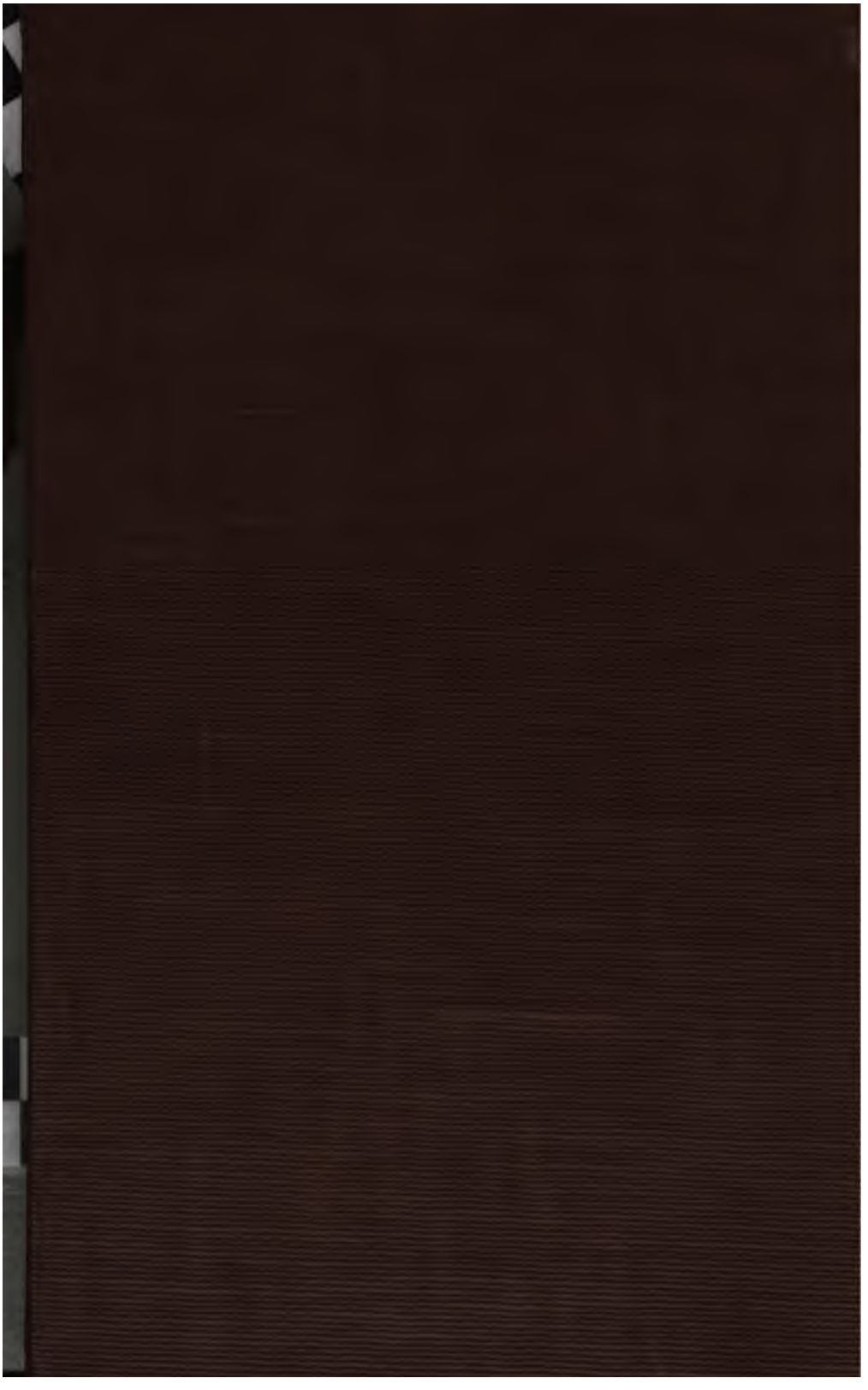
VI. The case of those who join in NO way of public worship at all. This, after what has been

said, will admit of a very short and easy solution: it being obvious to understand, that the methods above laid down have the same propriety here as in other cases. But what shall we say as to force? I answer, 1. if all ways of religious worship be prohibited but one, all force is unjust. For to use force upon men because they will not join in some way of religious worship, when there is but one way to join in, is to use force to compel them to join in that one way; which must needs be unreasonable, because the foundation from whence this necessity either of joining in one way or in no way ariseth, is itself unreasonable. The magistrate, I have shewn, has no right to use force to suppress all religions but one. If so he can have no right to compel men to join in that one way. For a greater liberty always implies a less; and it is certainly a less liberty barely not to join in that way which is prescribed by the magistrate, than it is to set up other ways in opposition to it. But, 2. if there be an absolute liberty to every man to chuse what religion he pleases, or a liberty under such restraints only as have before been mentioned; I think that in this case, those who neglect to join in any one way of public worship, are punishable with any degree of severity, that the magistrate thinks fit to make use of. For though (as I said just now) when all ways of religious worship are prohibited but one, the liberty of not joining in that one way is a less liberty, than the liberty of

setting up other ways in opposition to it; yet it is plain, that when all ways are allowed, the liberty of joining in no way is the greatest liberty of all. And a liberty, I say, it is not to be endured, because it cannot be supported by any plea of conscience. Many Christians (for of Christians only I would now be understood to speak) cannot join in this or in that way of public worship, consistently with their consciences. But never was it yet heard of, nor am I able to apprehend, that it should be against the conscience of a Christian to join in some way, provided that way may be of his own chusing. But may not a good man be supposed, so far to disprove of all the ways of worship which are in use in any country, as to think himself obliged to join in none of them? The case is possible to be conceived, I own. But if all ways be tolerated, it is a case which in fact is not likely to happen, because there is no probability that any man should be so singular in his opinions, as not to be able to find enough of the same mind to make a separate congregation. But if all ways of worship are not tolerated, though there be but one single exception, the thing will be a great deal more than possible: and in that case it will be right, that Dissenters and Absenters, considered as such, should have one and the same treatment. A Papist, for instance, can join in no way of public worship in use here in England. Therefore it would be unjust to be severe upon

Papists purely upon that account. But setting this case and such like cases aside, the rule is true, that those, who will not of their own accord join in some one way of public worship, ought to be compelled to it; which if it does them no good, (which nevertheless it is to be hoped that it will) it will be for the good of others, as it helps to remove the influence of bad examples.

I would be understood (as I said just now) to speak all this of professed Christians: for as to those who professing themselves to be no Christians, do likewise join in no way of public worship; their case is of so little concern to us at present, that I do not think it worth the pains to examine it.

END OF PART V. AND OF VOL. III.

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